Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

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Editor's Note: The President was in Oshkosh, WI, on October 15, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, October 15, 2004

Presidential Debate in St. Louis, Missouri

October 8, 2004

Charles Gibson. Good evening from the Field House at Washington University in St. Louis. I'm Charles Gibson of ABC News and "Good Morning America." I welcome you to the second of the 2004 Presidential debates between President George W. Bush, the Republican nominee, and Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee. The debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates.

Tonight's format is going to be a bit different. We have assembled a townhall meeting. We're in the "Show Me" State, as everyone knows Missouri to be, so Missouri residents will ask the questions, these 140 citizens who were identified by the Gallup Organization as not yet committed in this election. Now, earlier today each audience member gave me two questions on cards like this: One they'd like to ask of the President; the other they'd like to ask the Senator. I have selected the questions to be asked and the order. No one has seen the final list of questions but me—certainly not the candidates. No audience member knows if he or she will be called upon. Audience microphones will be turned off after a question is asked.

Audience members will address their question to a specific candidate. He'll have 2 minutes to answer. The other candidate will have a minute and a half for rebuttal. And I have the option of extending discussion for 1 minute, to be divided equally between the two men. All subjects are open for discussion. And you probably know the light system by now, green light at 30 seconds, yellow at 15, red at 5, and flashing red means you're done. Those are the candidates' rules. I will hold the candidates to the time limits forcefully, but politely, I hope.

And now please join me in welcoming, with great respect, President Bush and Senator Kerry.

Gentlemen, to the business at hand. The first question is for Senator Kerry, and it will come from Cheryl Otis, who is right behind me.

Consistent Leadership

Cheryl Otis. Senator Kerry, after talking to several coworkers and family and friends, I asked the ones who said they were not voting for you, why. They said that you were too wishy-washy. Do you have a reply for them?

Senator Kerry. Yes, I certainly do. [*Laughter*] But let me just first, Cheryl, if you will, I want to thank Charlie for moderating. I want to thank Washington University for hosting us here this evening. Mr. President, it's good to be with you again this evening, sir.

Cheryl, the President didn't find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, so he's really turned his campaign into a weapon of mass deception. And the result is that you've been bombarded with advertisements suggesting that I've changed a position on this or that or the other. Now, the three things they try to say I've changed position on are the PATRIOT Act—I haven't. I support it. I just don't like the way John Ashcroft has applied it. And we're going to change a few things. The chairman of the Republican Party thinks we ought to change a few things.

No Child Left Behind Act—I voted for it. I support it. I support the goals. But the President has underfunded it by $28 billion. Right here in St. Louis, you've laid off 350 teachers. You're 150—excuse me, I think it's a little more—about $100 million shy of what you ought to be under the No Child Left Behind Act to help your education system here. So I complain about that. I've argued that we should fully fund it. The President says I've changed my mind. I haven't

changed my mind. I'm going to fully fund it. So these are the differences.

Now, the President has presided over the economy where we've lost 1.6 million jobs, the first President in 72 years to lose jobs. I have a plan to put people back to work. That's not wishy-washy. I'm going to close the loopholes that actually encourage companies to go overseas. The President wants to keep them open. I think I'm right. I think he's wrong.

I'm going to give you a tax cut. The President gave—the top one percent of income earners in America got $89 billion last year, more than the 80 percent of people who earn $100,000 or less all put together. I think that's wrong. That's not wishy-washy, and that's what I'm fighting for—you.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, a minute and a half.

President Bush. Charlie, thank you, and thank our panelists. Senator, thank you. I can—and thanks, Washington U. as well.

I can see why people at your workplace think he changes positions a lot, because he does. He said he voted for the $87 billion and—or voted against it right before he voted for it. And that sends a confusing signal to people. He said he thought Saddam Hussein was a grave threat and now said it was a mistake to remove Saddam Hussein from power. No, I can see why people think that he changes position quite often, because he does.

You know, for a while, he was a strong supporter of getting rid of Saddam Hussein. He saw the wisdom, until the Democratic primary came along and Howard Dean, the antiwar candidate, began to gain on him. And he changed positions. I don't see how you can lead this country in a time of war, in a time of uncertainty, if you change your mind because of politics.

He just brought up the tax cut. You remember, we increased that child credit by $1000, reduced the marriage penalty, created a 10-percent tax bracket for the lower income Americans—that's right at the middle class. He voted against it, and yet he tells you he's for a middle-class tax cut. It's—you've got to be consistent when you're the President. There's a lot of pressures, and you've got to be firm and consistent.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, I would follow up, but we have a series of questions on Iraq, and so I will turn to the next questioner. The question for President Bush, and the questioner is Robin Dahle.

Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction

Robin Dahle. Mr. President——

Mr. Gibson. Can you get a microphone, Robin, I'm sorry.

Mr. Dahle. Mr. President, yesterday in a statement you admitted that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction but justified the invasion by stating, I quote, "He retained the knowledge, the materials, the means, and the intent to produce weapons of mass destruction and could have passed this knowledge to our terrorist enemies." Do you sincerely believe this to be a reasonable justification for invasion when this statement applies to so many other countries, including North Korea?

President Bush. Each situation is different, Robin. And obviously, we hope that diplomacy works before you ever use force. The hardest decision a President makes is ever to use force.

After 9/11, we had to look at the world differently. After 9/11, we had to recognize that when we saw a threat, we must take it seriously before it comes to hurt us. In the old days, we'd see a threat, and we could deal with it if we felt like it or not. But 9/11 changed it all.

I vowed to our countrymen that I would do everything I could to protect the American people. That's why we're bringing Al Qaida to justice. Seventy-five percent of them have been brought to justice. That's why I said to Afghanistan, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." And the Taliban is no longer in power, and Al Qaida no longer has a place to plan.

And I saw a unique threat in Saddam Hussein, as did my opponent, because we thought he had weapons of mass destruction. And the unique threat was that he could give weapons of mass destruction to an organization like Al Qaida, and the harm they inflicted on us with airplanes would be multiplied greatly by weapons of mass destruction. And that was a serious, serious threat.

So I tried diplomacy. I went to the United Nations. But as we learned in the same report I quoted, Saddam Hussein was gaming the Oil for Food Programme to get rid of sanctions. He was trying to get rid of sanctions for a reason. He wanted to restart his weapons programs.

We all thought there was weapons there, Robin. My opponent thought there was weapons there. That's why he called him a grave threat. I wasn't happy when we found out there wasn't weapons, and we've got an intelligence group together to figure out why. But Saddam Hussein was a unique threat, and the world is better off without him in power. And my opponent's plans lead me to conclude that Saddam Hussein would still be in power and the world would be more dangerous.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Robin, I'm going to answer your question. I'm also going to talk—respond to what you asked, Cheryl, at the same time.

The world is more dangerous today. The world is more dangerous today because the President didn't make the right judgments. Now, the President wishes that I had changed my mind. He wants you to believe that, because he can't come here and tell you that he's created new jobs for America. He's lost jobs. He can't come here and tell you that he's created health care for Americans because one-point—what, we've got 5 million Americans who have lost their health care, 96,000 of them right here in Missouri. He can't come here and tell you that he's left no child behind because he didn't fund No Child Left Behind.

So what does he do? He's trying to attack me. He wants you to believe that I can't be President, and he's trying to make you believe it because he wants you to think I change my mind.

Well, let me tell you straight up, I've never changed my mind about Iraq. I do believe Saddam Hussein was a threat. I always believed he was a threat—believed it in 1998 when Clinton was President. I wanted to give Clinton the power to use force if necessary. But I would have used that force wisely. I would have used that authority wisely, not rushed to war without a plan to win the peace. I would have brought our allies to our side. I would have fought to make certain our troops had everybody possible to help them win the mission.

This President rushed to war, pushed our allies aside, and Iran now is more dangerous, and so is North Korea with nuclear weapons. He took his eye off the ball, off of Usama bin Laden.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, I do want to follow up on this one, because there were several questions from the audience along this line.

President Bush. Are we going to have a rebuttal thing back and forth?

Mr. Gibson. Well, I was going to have you do it with the rebuttal. But you go ahead. [*Laughter*] You're up.

President Bush. Remember the last debate? My opponent said that America must pass a global test before we use force to protect ourselves. That's the kind of mindset that says sanctions were working. That's the kind of mindset that says let's keep it at the United Nations and hope things go well.

Saddam Hussein was a threat because he could have given weapons of mass destruction to terrorist enemies. Sanctions were not working. The United Nations was not effective at removing Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Gibson. Senator?

Senator Kerry. The goal of the sanctions was not to remove Saddam Hussein. It was to remove the weapons of mass destruction. And Mr. President, just yesterday the Duelfer report told you and the whole world they worked. He didn't have weapons of mass destruction, Mr. President. That was the objective. And if we had used smart diplomacy, we could have saved $200 billion and an invasion of Iraq, and right now Usama bin Laden might be in jail or dead. That's the war against terror.

Mr. Gibson. We're going to have another question now on the subject of Iraq. And I'm just going to turn to Anthony Baldi with a question for Senator Kerry.

Mr. Baldi.

Iraq/War on Terror

Anthony Baldi. Senator Kerry, the U.S. is preparing a new Iraq Government, and we'll proceed to withdraw U.S. troops. Would you proceed with the same plans as President Bush?

Senator Kerry. Anthony, I would not. I have laid out a different plan because the President's plan is not working. You see that every night on television. There's chaos in Iraq. King Abdullah of Jordan said just yesterday—or the day before, you can't hold elections in Iraq with the chaos that's going on today. Senator Richard Lugar, the Republican chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said that the handling of the reconstruction aid in Iraq by this administration has been "incompetent." Those are the Republican chairman's words. Senator Hagel of Nebraska said that the handling of Iraq is "beyond pitiful, beyond embarrassing. It's in the zone of dangerous." Those are the words of two Republicans, respected, both on the Foreign Relations Committee.

Now, I have to tell you, I would do something different. I would reach out to our allies in a way that this President hasn't. He pushed them away time and again, pushed them away at the U.N., pushed them away individually. Two weeks ago, there was a meeting of the North Atlantic Council, which is the political arm of NATO. They discussed the possibility of a small training unit or having a total takeover of the training in Iraq. Did our administration push for the total training of Iraq? No. Were they silent? Yes. Was there an effort to bring all the allies together around that? No—because they've always wanted this to be an American effort. You know, they even had the Defense Department issue a memorandum saying don't bother applying for assistance or for being part of the reconstruction if you weren't part of our original coalition.

Now, that's not a good way to build support and reduce the risk for our troops and make America safer. I'm going to get the training done for our troops. I'm going to get the training of Iraqis done faster, and I'm going to get our allies back to the table.

President Bush. Two days ago in the Oval Office, I met with the Finance Minister from Iraq. He came to see me, and he talked about how optimistic he was and the country was about heading toward elections. Think about it. They're going from tyranny to elections. He talked about the reconstruction efforts that are beginning to take hold. He talked about the fact that Iraqis love to be free. He said he was optimistic when he came here. Then he turned on the TV and listened to the political rhetoric, and all of a sudden he was pessimistic.

This is a guy who, along with others, has taken great risk for freedom, and we need to stand with him. My opponent says he has a plan—sounds familiar because it's called the Bush plan. We're going to train troops, and we are. We'll have 125,000 trained by the end of December. We're spending about $7 billion.

He talks about a grand idea: Let's have a summit; we're going to solve the problem in Iraq by holding a summit. And what is he going to say to those people that show up to the summit? "Join me in the wrong war at the wrong time at the wrong place"? Risk your troops in a war you've called a "mistake"? Nobody is going to follow somebody who doesn't believe we can succeed and somebody who says the war where we are is a "mistake." I know how these people think. I meet with them all the time. I talk to Tony Blair all the time. I talk to Silvio Berlusconi. They're not going to follow an American President who says, "Follow me into a mistake."

Our plan is working. We're going to make elections, and Iraq is going to be free, and America will be better off for it.

Mr. Gibson. Do you want to follow up, Senator?

Senator Kerry. Yes, sir, please.

Ladies and gentlemen, the right war was Usama bin Laden and Afghanistan. That was the right place, and the right time was Tora Bora, when we had him cornered in the mountains. Now, everyone in the world knows that there were no weapons of mass destruction. That was the reason Congress gave him the authority to use force, not after excuse to get rid of the regime.

Now we have to succeed. I've always said that. I have been consistent. Yes, we have to succeed, and I have a better plan to help us do it.

President Bush. First of all, we didn't find out he didn't have weapons until we got there, and my opponent thought he had weapons and told everybody he thought he had weapons. And secondly, it's a fundamental misunderstanding to say that the war on terror is only Usama bin Laden. The war on terror is to make sure that these terrorist organizations do not end up with weapons of mass destruction. That's what the war on terror is about.

Of course we're going to find Usama bin Laden. We've already got 75 percent of his people, and we're on the hunt for him. But this is a global conflict that requires firm resolve.

Mr. Gibson. The next question is for President Bush, and it comes from Nikki Washington.

President's Decisionmaking on Iraq

Nikki Washington. Thank you. Mr. President, my mother and sister traveled abroad this summer, and when they got back, they talked to us about how shocked they were at the intensity of aggravation that other countries had with how we handled the Iraq situation. Diplomacy is, obviously, something that we have to really work on. What is your plan to repair relations with other countries, given the current situation?

President Bush. No, I appreciate that. I—listen, I—we've got a great country. I love our values. And I recognize I've made some decisions that have caused people to not understand the great values of our country. I remember when Ronald Reagan was the President. He stood on principle. Some might have called that stubborn. He stood on principle, standing up to the Soviet Union. And we won that conflict, yet at the same time, he was very—we were very unpopular in Europe because of decisions he made.

I recognize that taking Saddam Hussein out was unpopular, but I made the decision because I thought it was in the right interests of our security.

You know, I've made some decisions on Israel. That's unpopular. I wouldn't deal with Arafat because I felt like he had let the former President down, and I don't think he's the kind of person that can lead toward a Palestinian state. And people in Europe didn't like that decision. And that was unpopular, but it was the right thing to do. I believe Palestinians ought to have a state, but I know they need leadership that's committed to democracy and freedom, leadership that will be willing to reject terrorism.

I made a decision not to join the International Criminal Court in The Hague, which is where our troops could be brought to—brought in front of a judge, an unaccounted judge. I don't think we ought to join that. That was unpopular. And so what I'm telling you is, is that sometimes in this world you make unpopular decisions because you think they're right.

We'll continue to reach out. Listen, there's 30 nations involved in Iraq, some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan. People love America. Sometimes they don't like the decisions made by America, but I don't think you want a President who tries to become popular and does the wrong thing. You don't want to join the International Criminal Court just because it's popular in certain capitals in Europe.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Nikki, that's a question that's been raised by a lot of people around the country. Let me address it but also talk about the weapons the President just talked about, because every part of the President's answer just now promises you more of the same over the next 4 years.

The President stood right here in this hall 4 years ago, and he was asked a question by somebody just like you: Under what circumstances would you send people to war? And his answer was: With a viable exit strategy and only with enough forces to get the job done. He didn't do that. He broke that promise. We didn't have enough forces. General Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, told him he was going to need several hundred thousand. And guess what? They retired General Shinseki for telling him that. This President hasn't listened.

I went to meet with the members of the Security Council in the week before we voted. I went to New York. I talked to all of them to find out how serious they were about really holding Saddam Hussein accountable. I came away convinced that if we

worked at it, if we were ready to work at letting Hans Blix do his job and thoroughly go through the inspections, that if push came to shove, they'd be there with us.

But the President just arbitrarily brought the hammer down and said, "Nope, sorry, time for diplomacy is over. We're going." He rushed to war without a plan to win the peace. Ladies and gentlemen, he gave you a speech and told you he'd plan carefully, take every precaution, take our allies with us. He didn't. He broke his word.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President.

President Bush. I remember sitting in the White House, looking at those generals, saying, "Do you have what you need in this war? Do you have what it takes?" I remember going down in the basement of the White House the day we committed our troops—as last resort—looking at Tommy Franks and the generals on the ground, asking them, "Do we have the right plan with the right troop level?" And they looked me in the eye and said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President." Of course I listened to our generals. That's what a President does. A President sets the strategy and relies upon good military people to execute that strategy.

Mr. Gibson. Senator.

Senator Kerry. You rely on good military people to execute the military component of the strategy, but winning the peace is larger than just the military component. General Shinseki had the wisdom to say you're going to need several hundred thousand troops to win the peace. The military's job is to win the war. The President's job is to win the peace. The President did not do what was necessary, didn't bring in enough nations, didn't deliver the help, didn't close off the borders, didn't even guard the ammo dumps. And now our kids are being killed with ammos right out of that dump.

Mr. Gibson. The next question is for Senator Kerry, and it comes from over here, from Randee Jacobs. You'll need a microphone.

Senator Kerry. Is it Randee? I'm sorry.

Iran/North Korea

Randee Jacobs. Yes, Randee. Iran sponsors terrorism and has missiles capable of hitting Israel and southern Europe. Iran will have nuclear weapons in 2 to 3 years' time. In the event that U.N. sanctions don't stop this threat, what will you do as President?

Senator Kerry. I don't think you can just rely on U.N. sanctions, Randee, but you're absolutely correct. It is a threat. It's a huge threat. And what's interesting is it's a threat that has grown while the President has been preoccupied with Iraq, where there wasn't a threat. If he'd let the inspectors do their job and go on, we wouldn't have 10 times the numbers of forces in Iraq that we have in Afghanistan chasing Usama bin Laden.

Meanwhile, while Iran is moving towards nuclear weapons—some 37 tons of what they call yellow cake, the stuff they use to make enriched uranium—while they're doing that, North Korea has moved from one bomb, maybe—maybe—to 4 to 7 bombs.

For 2 years the President didn't even engage with North Korea, did nothing at all, while it was growing more dangerous, despite the warnings of people like former Secretary of Defense William Perry, who negotiated getting television cameras and inspectors into that reactor. We were safer before President Bush came to office. Now, they have the bombs, and we're less safe.

So what do we do? We've got to join with the British and the French, with the Germans who've been involved in their initiative. We've got to lead the world now to crack down on proliferation as a whole. But the President has been slow to do that even in Russia. At his pace, it's going to take 13 years to reduce and get a hold of all the loose nuclear material in the former Soviet Union. I've proposed a plan that can capture it and contain it and clean it within 4 years.

And the President is moving toward the creation of our own bunker-busting nuclear weapon. It's very hard to get other countries to give up their weapons when you're busy developing a new one. I'm going to lead the world in the greatest counterproliferation effort, and if we have to get tough with Iran, believe me, we will get tough.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, a minute and a half.

President Bush. That answer almost made me want to scowl. [*Laughter*] He keeps talking about letting the inspectors do their job. It's naive and dangerous to say that.

That's what the Duelfer report showed. He was deceiving the inspectors.

Secondly, of course we've been involved with Iran. I fully understand the threat. And that's why we're doing what he suggested we do, get the Brits, the Germans, and the French to go make it very clear to the Iranians that if they expect to be a party to the world, to give up their nuclear ambitions. We've been doing that.

Let me talk about North Korea. It is naive and dangerous to take a policy that he suggested the other day, which is to have bilateral relations with North Korea. Remember, he is the person who is accusing me of not acting multilaterally. He now wants to take the six-party talks we have—China, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, Japan, and the United States—and undermine them by having bilateral talks. That's what President Clinton did. He had bilateral talks with the North Korean, and guess what happened? He didn't honor the agreement. He was enriching uranium. That is a bad policy.

Of course, we're paying attention to these. That's a great question about Iran. That's why, in my speech to the Congress, I said there is an axis of evil, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, and we're paying attention to it, and we're making progress.

Mr. Gibson. We're going to move on, Mr. President, with a question for you. And it comes from Daniel Farley.

Mr. Farley.

Possibility of Reinstating the Draft

Daniel Farley. Mr. President, since we continue to police the world, how do you intend to maintain a military presence without reinstituting a draft?

President Bush. Yes, great question. Thanks.

I hear there's rumors on the Internets that we're going to have a draft. We're not going to have a draft—period. The All-Volunteer Army works. It works particularly when we pay our troops well. It works when we make sure they've got housing, like we have done in the last military budgets. An all-volunteer army is best suited to fight the new wars of the 21st century, which is to be specialized and to find these people as they hide around the world. We don't need massed armies anymore.

One of the things we've done is we've taken the—we're beginning to transform our military. And by that I mean we're moving troops out of Korea and replacing them with more effective weapons. We don't need as much manpower on the Korean Peninsula to keep a deterrent.

In Europe, we have massed troops as if the Soviet Union existed and was going to invade into Europe, but those days are over with. And so we're moving troops out of Europe and replacing it with more effective equipment.

So the answer to your question is, we're withdrawing—not from the world—we're drawing manpower, so they can be stationed here in America, so there's less rotation, so life is easier on their families and therefore more likely to be—we'll be more likely to keep people in the All-Volunteer Army.

One of the most important things we're doing in this administration is transformation. There's some really interesting technologies. For example, we're flying unmanned vehicles that can send real-time messages back to stations in the United States. That saves manpower, and it saves equipment. It also means that we can target things easier and move more quickly, which means we need to be lighter and quicker and more facile and highly trained.

Forget all this talk about a draft. We're not going to have a draft so long as I'm the President.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Daniel, I don't support a draft. But let me tell you where the President's policies have put us. The President—and this is one of the reasons why I'm very proud in this race to have the support of General John Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Admiral William Crowe, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; General Tony McPeak, who ran the air war for the President's father and did a brilliant job—supporting me; General Wes Clark, who won the war in Kosovo—supporting me; because they all—and General Baca, who was the head of the National Guard—supporting me. Why? Because they

understand that our military is overextended under this President.

Our Guard and Reserves have been turned into almost active duty. You've got people doing two and three rotations. You've got stop-loss policies so people can't get out when they were supposed to. You've got a backdoor draft right now, and a lot of our military are underpaid. These are families that get hurt. It hurts the middle class. It hurts communities, because these are our first-responders, and they're called up, and they're over there, not over here.

Now, I'm going to add 40,000 active duty forces to the military. And I'm going to make people feel good about being safe in our military and not overextended because I'm going to run a foreign policy that actually does what President Reagan did and President Eisenhower did and others. We're going to build alliances. We're not going to go unilaterally. We're not going to go alone like this President did.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, let's extend for a minute.

President Bush. Let me just—I've got to answer this.

Mr. Gibson. Exactly. And with Reservists being held on duty and some soldiers——

President Bush. Let me just answer what he just said about going alone.

Mr. Gibson. I wanted to get into the issue of the backdoor draft.

President Bush. You tell Tony Blair we're going alone. Tell Tony Blair we're going alone. Tell Silvio Berlusconi we're going alone. Tell Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland we're going alone. We've got 30 countries there. It denigrates an alliance to say we're going alone, to discount their sacrifices. You cannot lead an alliance if you say you're going alone. And people listen. They're sacrificing with us.

Mr. Gibson. Senator.

Senator Kerry. Mr. President, countries are leaving the coalition, not joining. Eight countries have left it. If Missouri, just given the number of people from Missouri who are in the military over there today, were a country, it would be the third largest country in the coalition, behind Great Britain and the United States. That's not a grand coalition. Ninety percent of the casualties are American. Ninety percent of the costs are coming out of your pockets. I could do a better job. My plan does a better job, and that's why I'll be a better Commander in Chief.

Mr. Gibson. The next question, Senator Kerry, is for you, and it comes from Ann Bronsing, who I believe is over in this area.

Terrorist Attacks/Homeland Security

Ann Bronsing. Senator Kerry, we have been fortunate that there have been no further terrorist attacks on American soil since 9/11. Why do you think this is? And if elected, what will you do to assure our safety?

Senator Kerry. Thank you very much, Ann. I've asked in my security briefings why that is, and I can't go into all the answers, et cetera, but let me say this to you. This President and his administration have told you and all of us, "It's not a question of when, it's a question of"—excuse me, "not a question of if, it's a question of when." We've been told that. The "when" I can't tell you. Between the World Trade Center bombing in—what was it, 1993 or so—and the next time was 5 years, 7 years. These people wait. They'll plan. They plot.

I agree with the President that we have to go after them and get them wherever they are. I just think I can do that far more effectively because the most important weapon in doing that is intelligence. You've got to have the best intelligence in the world. And in order to have the best intelligence in the world, to know who the terrorists are and where they are and what they're plotting, you've got to have the best cooperation you've ever had in the world.

Now, to go back to your question, Nikki, we're not getting the best cooperation in the world today. We've got a whole bunch of countries that pay a price for dealing with the United States of America now. I'm going to change that.

And I'm going to put in place a better homeland security effort. Look at it, 95 percent of our containers coming into this country are not inspected today. When you get on an airplane, your cart—your bag is X-rayed, but the cargo hold isn't X-rayed. Do you feel safer? This President, in the last debate, said that, well, that would be a big tax gap if we did that. Ladies and gentlemen,

it's his tax plan. He chose a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans over getting that equipment out into the homeland as fast as possible. We have bridges and tunnels that aren't being secured; chemical plants, nuclear plants that aren't secured; hospitals that are overcrowded in their emergency rooms. If we had a disaster today, could they handle it?

This President chose a tax cut over homeland security. Wrong choice.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President.

President Bush. That's an odd thing to say since we've tripled the homeland security budget from 10 to 30 billion dollars. Listen, we'll do everything we can to protect the homeland. My opponent is right: We need good intelligence. It's also a curious thing for him to say, since right after 1993, he voted to cut the intelligence budget by $7.5 billion.

The best way to defend America in this world we live in is to stay on the offense. We've got to be right 100 percent of the time here at home, and they've got to be right once. And that's the reality. And there's a lot of good people working hard. We're doing the best we possibly can to share information. That's why the PATRIOT Act was important. The PATRIOT Act is vital, by the way. It's a tool that law enforcement now uses to be able to talk between each other. My opponent says he hasn't changed his positions on it. No, but he's for weakening it.

I don't think my opponent has got the right view about the world to make us safe. I really don't. First of all, I don't think he can succeed in Iraq. And if Iraq were to fail, it would be a haven for terrorists, and there would be money, and the world would be much more dangerous. I don't see how you can win in Iraq if you don't believe we should be there in the first place. I don't see how you can lead troops if you say, "It's the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time." I don't see how the Iraqis are going to have confidence in the American President if all they hear is that it was a "mistake" to be there in the first place.

This war is a long, long war, and it requires steadfast determination. And it requires a complete understanding that we not only chase down Al Qaida, but we disrupt terrorists' safe havens as well as people who could provide the terrorists with support.

Mr. Gibson. I want to extend for a minute, Senator, and I'm curious about something you said. You said, "It's not when but if." You think it's inevitable? Because the sense of security is a very basic thing with everybody in this country, worried about their kids.

Senator Kerry. Well, the President and his experts have told America that it's not a question of if, it's a question of when. And I accept what the President has said. These terrorists are serious. They're deadly, and they know nothing except trying to kill. I understand that. That's why I will never stop at anything to hunt down and kill the terrorists.

But you heard the President just say to you that we've added money. Folks, the test is not if you've added money. The test is, have you done everything possible to make America secure? He chose a tax cut for wealthy Americans over the things that I listed to you.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President.

President Bush. Well, we'll talk about the tax cut for middle class here in a minute. But yes, I'm worried. I'm worried. I'm worried about our country. And all I can tell you is, every day I know that there's people working overtime, doing the very best they can. And the reason I'm worried is because there's a vicious enemy that has an ideology of hate. And the way to defeat them long-term, by the way, is to spread freedom. Liberty can change habits, and that's what's happening in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, we're going to turn to questions now on domestic policy, and we're going to start with health issues. And the first question is for President Bush, and it's from John Horstman.

Drug Imports From Canada/Health Care

John Horstman. Mr. President, why did you block the reimportation of safer and inexpensive drugs from Canada, which would have cut 40 to 60 percent off of the cost?

President Bush. I haven't yet. I just want to make sure they're safe. When a drug comes in from Canada, I want to make sure it cures you and doesn't kill you. And that's

why the FDA and that's why the Surgeon General are looking very carefully to make sure it can be done in a safe way. I've got an obligation to make sure our Government does everything we can to protect you. And one of—my worry is that it looks like it's from Canada, and it might be from a third world. We've just got to make sure, before somebody thinks they're buying a product, that it works. And that's why we're doing what we're doing. Now, it may very well be, here in December, you hear me say, "I think there's a safe way to do it."

Other ways to make sure drugs are cheaper: One is to speed up generic drugs to the marketplace quicker. Pharmaceuticals were using loopholes to keep brand drugs in place, and generics are much less expensive than brand drugs. And we're doing just that. Another is to get our seniors to sign up for these drug discount cards, and they're working. Wanda Blackmore, I met here from Missouri—the first time she bought drugs with her drug discount card she paid $1.14, I think it was, for about $10 worth of drugs. These cards make sense.

And you know, in 2006, seniors are going to get prescription drug coverage for the first time in Medicare, because I went to Washington to fix problems. Medicare—the issue of Medicare used to be called "Mediscare." People didn't want to touch it for fear of getting hurt politically. I wanted to get something done. I think our seniors deserve a modern medical system. And in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage.

Thank you for asking.

Mr. Gibson. Senator, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. John, you heard the President just say that he thought he might try to be for it. Four years ago, right here in this forum, he was asked the same question, "Can't people be able to import drugs from Canada?" Do you know what he said? "I think that makes sense. I think that's a good idea"—4 years ago.

Now, the President said, "I'm not blocking that." Ladies and gentlemen, the President just didn't level with you—right now, again. He did block it, because we passed it in the United States Senate. We sent it over to the House that you could import drugs. We took care of the safety issues. We're not talking about third-world drugs. We're talking about drugs made right here in the United States of America that have American brand names on them, in American bottles, and we're asking they be able to allow you to get them. The President blocked it.

The President also took Medicare, which belongs to you, and he could have lowered the cost of Medicare and lowered your taxes and lowered the cost to seniors. You know what he did? He made it illegal—illegal—for Medicare to do what the VA does, which is bulk-purchase drugs so that you could lower the price and get them out to you lower. He put $139 billion of windfall profit into the pockets of the drug companies, right out of your pockets.

That's the difference between us. The President sides with the power companies, the oil companies, the drug companies. And I'm fighting to let you get those drugs from Canada, and I'm fighting to let Medicare survive. I'm fighting for the middle class. That's the difference.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President.

President Bush. If they're safe, they're coming. I want to remind you that it wasn't just my administration that made the decision on safety. President Clinton did the same thing, because we have an obligation to protect you.

Now, he talks about Medicare. He's been in the United States Senate 20 years. Show me one accomplishment toward Medicare that he accomplished. I've been in Washington, DC, 3½ years and led the Congress to reform Medicare so our seniors have got a modern health care system. That's what leadership is all about.

Senator Kerry. Actually, Mr. President, in 1997, we fixed Medicare, and I was one of the people involved in it. We not only fixed Medicare and took it way out into the future, we did something that you don't know how to do. We balanced the budget. And we paid down the debt of our Nation for 2 years in a row, and we created 23 million new jobs at the same time. And it's the President's fiscal policies that have driven up the biggest deficits in American history. He's added more debt to the debt of the United States in 4 years than all the way from George

Washington to Ronald Reagan put together. Go figure.

Mr. Gibson. Next question is for Senator Kerry, and this comes from Norma-Jean Laurent.

Tort Reform

Norma-Jean Laurent. Senator Kerry, you've stated your concern for the rising cost of health care. Yet you chose a Vice Presidential candidate who has made millions of dollars successfully suing medical professionals. How do you reconcile this with the voters?

Senator Kerry. Very easily. John Edwards is the author of the Patients' Bill of Rights. He wanted to give people rights. John Edwards and I support tort reform. We both believe that as lawyers—I'm a lawyer too—and I believe that we will be able to get a fix that has eluded everybody else, because we know how to do it. It's in my health care proposal. Go to johnkerry.com—you can pull it off the Internet—and you'll find a tort reform plan.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, important to understand, the President and his friends try to make a big deal out of it. Is it a problem? Yes, it's a problem. Do we need to fix it, particularly for ob-gyns * and for brain surgeons and others? Yes. But it's less than one percent of the total cost of health care. Your premiums are going up. You've gone up in Missouri about $3,500. You've gone up 64 percent. You've seen co-pays go up, deductibles go up. Everything has gone up. Five million people have lost their health insurance under this President, and he's done nothing about it.

I have a plan. I have a plan to lower the cost of health care for you. I have a plan to cover all children. I have a plan to let you buy into the same health care Senators and Congressmen give themselves. I have a plan that's going to allow people 55 to 64 to buy into Medicare early. And I have a plan that will take the catastrophic cases out of the system, off your backs, pay for it out of a Federal fund, which lowers the premiums for everybody in America, makes American business more competitive, and makes health care more affordable.

Now, all of that can happen, but I have to ask you to do one thing. Join me in rolling back the President's unaffordable tax cut for people earning more than $200,000 a year. That's all. Ninety-eight percent of America, I'm giving you a tax cut, and I'm giving you health care.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, a minute and a half.

President Bush. Let me see where to start here. First, the National Journal named Senator Kerry * the most liberal Senator of all. And that's saying something in that bunch. You might say that took a lot of hard work.

The reason I bring that up is because he's proposed $2.2 trillion in new spending and he says he's going to tax the rich to close the tax gap. He can't. He's going to tax everybody here to fund his programs. That's just reality.

And what are his health programs? First, he says he's for medical liability reform, particularly for ob-gyns. There was a bill on the floor of the United States Senate that he could have showed up and voted for if he's so much for it. Secondly, he says that medical liability costs only cause one percent increase. That shows a lack of understanding. Doctors practice defensive medicine because of all the frivolous lawsuits that cost our Government $28 billion a year.

And finally, he says he's going to have a novel health care plan. You know what it is? The Federal Government is going to run it. It is the largest increase in Federal Government health care ever, and it fits with his philosophy. That's why I told you about the award he won from the National Journal. That's what liberals do: They create Government-sponsored health care. Maybe you think that makes sense. I don't. Government-sponsored health care would lead to rationing. It would ruin the quality of health care in America.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, we got several questions along this line, and I'm just curious if you'd go further on what you talked about with tort reform. Would you be favoring capping awards on pain and suffering? Would

* White House correction.

* White House correction.

you limit attorneys' fees—yes, to follow up on this for a minute. Thirty seconds.

Senator Kerry. Yes, I think we should look at the punitive, and we should have some limitations. But look, what's really important, Charlie, is the President's just trying to scare everybody here with throwing labels around. I mean, "compassionate conservative," what does that mean? Cutting 500,000 kids from after-school programs? Cutting 365,000 kids from health care? Running up the biggest deficits in American history? Mr. President, you're batting 0 for 2. I mean, seriously, labels don't mean anything. What means something is do you have a plan, and I want to talk about my plan some more. I hope we can.

Mr. Gibson. We'll get to that in just a minute. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. What does matter is the plan. He said he is for—you're now for capping punitive damages? That's odd. You should have shown up on the floor in the Senate and voted for it then. Medical liability issues are a problem, a significant problem. He's been in the United States Senate for 20 years, and he hasn't addressed it. We passed it out of the House of Representatives. Guess where it stuck? It stuck in the Senate because the trial lawyers won't act on it, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Mr. Gibson. The next question is for President Bush, and it comes from Matthew O'Brien.

Federal Deficit

Matthew O'Brien. Mr. President, you have enjoyed a Republican majority in the House and Senate for most of your Presidency. In that time, you've not vetoed a single spending bill. Excluding 120 billion spent in Iran and Afghan—I'm sorry, Iraq and Afghanistan, there has been $700 billion spent and not paid for by taxes. Please explain how the spending you have approved and not paid for is better for the American people than the spending proposed by your opponent.

President Bush. Right. Thank you for that. We have a deficit. We have a deficit because this country went into a recession. You might remember the stock market started to decline dramatically 6 months before I came to office, and then the bubble of the 1990s popped. And that cost us revenue—that cost us revenue.

Secondly, we're at war. And I'm going to spend what it takes to win the war, more than just 120 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan. We've got to pay our troops more. We have. We've increased money for ammunition and weapons and pay and homeland security. I just told this lady over here we spent—went from 10 to 30 billion dollars to protect the homeland. I think we have an obligation to spend that kind of money.

Plus, we cut taxes for everybody. Everybody got tax relief, so that they'd get out of the recession. I think if you raise taxes during a recession, you head to depression. I come from the school of thought that says when people have more money in their pocket during tough economic times, it increases demand or investment. Small businesses begin to grow, and jobs are added. We found out today that over the past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. I proposed a plan, detailed budget, that shows us cutting the deficit in half by 5 years.

And you're right, I haven't vetoed any spending bills because we worked together. Non-homeland, non-defense, discretionary spending was rising at 15 percent a year when I got into office. And today, it's less than one percent, because we're working together to try to bring this deficit under control. Like you, I'm concerned about the deficit. But I am not going to shortchange our troops in harm's way. And I'm not going to run up taxes which will cost this economy jobs.

Thank you for your question.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Let me begin by saying that my health care plan is not what the President described. It is not a Government takeover. You have choice: Choose your doctor; choose your plan. The Government has nothing to do with it. In fact, it doesn't ask you to do anything. If you don't want to take it, you don't have to. If you like your high premiums, you keep them. That's the way we leave it.

Now, with respect to the deficit, the President was handed a $5.6 trillion surplus, ladies

and gentlemen. That's where he was when he came into office. We now have a $2.6 trillion deficit. This is the biggest turnaround in the history of the country. He's the first President in 72 years to lose jobs. He talked about war. This is the first time the United States of America has ever had a tax cut when we're at war. Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, others knew how to lead. They knew how to ask the American people for the right things.

One percent of America—the highest one percent of income earners in America got $89 billion of tax cut last year. One percent of America got more than the 80 percent of America that earned from $100,000 down. The President thinks it's more important to fight for that top one percent than to fight for fiscal responsibility and to fight for you.

I want to put money in your pocket. I am—I have a proposal for a tax cut for all people earning less than the $200,000. The only people affected in my plan are the top income earners of America.

Mr. Gibson. I both—I heard you both say—I have heard you both say during the campaign, and I just heard you say it—that you're going to cut the deficit by a half in 4 years. But I didn't hear one thing in the last 3½ minutes that would indicate how either one of you do that.

President Bush. Look at the budget. One is, make sure Congress doesn't overspend. But let me talk back about where we've been. The stock market was declining 6 months prior to my arrival. It was the largest stock market correction—one of the largest in history, which foretold a recession. Because we cut taxes on everybody—remember, we ran up the child credit by 1,000; we reduced the marriage penalty; we created the 10-percent bracket; everybody who pays taxes got relief—the recession was one of the shortest in our Nation's history.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. After 9/11, after the recession had ended, the President asked for another tax cut and promised 5.6 million jobs would be created. He lost 1.6 million, ladies and gentlemen, and most of that tax cut went to the wealthiest people in the country. He came and asked for a tax cut; we wanted a tax cut to kick the economy into gear. Do you know what he presented us with? A $25 billion giveaway to the biggest corporations in America, including a $254 million refund check to Enron. Wrong priorities. You are my priority.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, the next question will be for you, and it comes from James Varner, who I believe is in this section. Mr. Varner? You need a microphone.

Taxes

James Varner. Thank you. Senator Kerry, would you be willing to look directly into the camera and, using simple and unequivocal language, give the American people your solemn pledge not to sign any legislation that will increase the tax burden on families earning less than $200,000 a year during your first term?

Senator Kerry. Absolutely. Yes. Right into the camera—yes. I am not going to raise taxes. I have a tax cut, and here's my tax cut. I raise the child care credit by $1,000 for families to help them be able to take care of their kids. I have a $4,000 tuition tax credit that goes to parents and kids, if they're earning for themselves, to be able to pay for college. And I lower the cost of health care in the way that I described to you.

Every part of my program, I've shown how I'm going to pay for it. And I've gotten good people, like former Secretary of the Treasury Bob Rubin for instance, who showed how to balance budgets and give you a good economy, to help me crunch these numbers and make them work. I've even scaled back some of my favorite programs already, like the child care program I wanted to fund and the national service program, because the President's deficit keeps growing. And I've said, as a pledge, I'm going to cut the deficit in half in 4 years.

Now, I'm going to restore what we did in the 1990s, ladies and gentlemen: Pay as you go. We're going to do it like you do it. The President broke the pay-as-you-go rule. Somebody here asked the question about why haven't you vetoed something. It's a good question. If you care about it, why don't you veto it? I think John McCain called the energy bill the no lobbyist left behind bill. I mean, you've got to stand up and fight somewhere, folks.

I'm pledging I will not raise taxes. I'm giving a tax cut to the people earning less than $200,000 a year. Now, for the people earning more than $200,000 a year, you are going to see a rollback to the level we were at with Bill Clinton, when people made a lot of money. And looking around here at this group here, I suspect there are only three people here who are going to be affected: the President, me, and Charlie, I'm sorry, you too. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, 90 seconds.

President Bush. It's just not credible. When he talks about being fiscally conservative, it's just not credible. If you look at his record in the Senate, he voted to break the spending—the caps, the spending caps, over 200 times, and here he says he's going to be a fiscal conservative all of a sudden. It's just not credible. You cannot believe it.

And of course he's going to raise your taxes. You see, he's proposed $2.2 trillion of new spending. And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, well, he's going to raise the taxes on the rich. That's what he said, the top two brackets. That raises—he says 800 billion; we say 600 billion. We've got battling green eyeshades—somewhere in between those numbers. And so there is a difference, what he's promised and what he could raise. Now, either he's going to break all these wonderful promises he's told you about, or he's going to raise taxes. And I suspect, given his record, he's going to raise taxes.

Is my time up yet?

Mr. Gibson. No, you can keep going.

President Bush. Keep going, good. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Gibson. You're on——

President Bush. You looked at me like my clock was up.

I think that the way to grow this economy is to keep taxes low, is to have an energy plan, is to have litigation reform. As I told you, we just got a report that said over the past 13 months, we've created 1.9 million new jobs. We're growing. And so the fundamental question of this campaign is, who's going to keep the economy growing so people can work? That's the fundamental question.

Mr. Gibson. I'm going to come back one more time to how these numbers add up and how you can cut that deficit in half in 4 years, given what you've both said.

Senator Kerry. Well, first of all, the President's figures of 2.2 trillion just aren't accurate. Those are the fuzzy math figures put together by some group that works for the campaign. That's not the number.

Number two, John McCain and I have a proposal, jointly, for a commission that closes corporate giveaway loopholes. We've got $40 billion going to Bermuda. We've got all kinds of giveaways. We ought to be shutting those down.

And third, credible? Ladies and gentlemen, in 1985, I was one of the first Democrats to move to balance the budget. I voted for the balanced budget in '93 and '97. We did it. We did it, and I was there.

Mr. Gibson. Thirty seconds—I'm sorry, thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes, I mean, he's got a record. He's been there for 20 years. You can run, but you can't hide. He voted 98 times to raise taxes. I mean, these aren't make-up figures. And so people are going to have to look at the record—look at the record of the man running for the President. They don't name him the most liberal in the United States Senate because he hasn't shown up to many meetings. They named him because of his votes, and it's reality. It's just not credible to say he's going to keep taxes down and balance budgets.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, the next question is for you, and it comes from James Hubb, over here.

Action on the Environment/Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

James Hubb. Mr. President, how would you rate yourself as an environmentalist? What specifically has your administration done to improve the condition of our Nation's air and water supply?

President Bush. Off-road diesel engines—we have reached an agreement to reduce pollution from off-road diesel engines by 90 percent. I've got a plan to increase the

wetlands by 3 million. We've got an aggressive brownfield program to refurbish inner-city sore spots to useful pieces of property.

I proposed to the United States Congress a Clear Skies Initiative to reduce sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury by 70 percent. I was—fought for a very strong title in the farm bill for the Conservation Reserve Program to set aside millions of acres of land for—to help improve wildlife in the habitat.

We proposed and passed a Healthy Forests bill, which was essential to working with—particularly in western States, to make sure that our forests were protected. What happens in those forests, because of lousy Federal policy, is they grow to be—they are not—they're not harvested. They're not taken care of, and as a result, they're like tinder boxes. And over the last summers I've flown over there. And so this is a reasonable policy to protect old stands of trees and, at the same time, make sure our forests aren't vulnerable to the forest fires that have destroyed acres after acres in the West. We've got a good, commonsense policy.

Now, I'm going to tell you what I really think is going to happen over time, is technology is going to change the way we live, for the good, for the environment. So I proposed a hydrogen automobile, a hydrogen-generated automobile. We're spending a billion dollars to come up with the technologies to do that.

That's why I'm a big proponent of clean coal technology, to make sure we can use coal but in a clean way. I guess you'd say I'm a good steward of the land. The quality of the air is cleaner since I've been the President; fewer water complaints since I've been the President; more land being restored since I've been the President.

Thank you for your question.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Boy, to listen to that, the President I don't think is living in a world of reality with respect to the environment. Now, if you're a Red Sox fan, that's okay. But if you're a President, it's not. Let me just say to you, number one, don't throw the labels around. Labels don't mean anything. I supported welfare reform. I led the fight to put 100,000 cops on the streets of America. I've been for faith-based initiatives helping to intervene in the lives of young children for years. I was—broke with my party in 1985, one of the first three Democrats to fight for a balanced budget when it was heresy. Labels don't fit, ladies and gentlemen.

Now, when it comes to the issue of the environment, this is one of the worst administrations in modern history. The Clear Skies bill that he just talked about—it's one of those Orwellian names you pull out of the sky, slap it onto something—like No Child Left Behind, but you leave millions of children behind. Here they're leaving the skies and the environment behind.

If they just left the Clean Air Act all alone the way it is today, no change, the air would be cleaner than it is if you pass the cleaner skies act. We're going backwards. In fact, his environmental enforcement chief air quality person at the EPA resigned in protest over what they're doing to what are called the New Source Performance Standards for air quality. They're going backwards on the definition for wetlands. They're going backwards on the water quality. They pulled out of the global warming, declared it dead; didn't even accept the science. I'm going to be a President who believes in science.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President?

President Bush. Well, had we joined the Kyoto treaty, which I guess he's referring to, it would have cost America a lot of jobs. It's one of these deals where in order to be popular in the halls of Europe, you sign a treaty. But I thought it would cost a lot of—I think there's a better way to do it. And I just told you the facts, sir. The quality of the air is cleaner since I've been the President of the United States. And we'll continue to spend money on research and development because I truly believe that's the way to get from how we live today to being able to live a standard of living that we're accustomed to and being able to protect our environment better—the use of technologies.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. The fact is that the Kyoto treaty was flawed. I was in Kyoto, and I was part of that. I know what happened. But this President didn't try to fix it. He just declared it dead, ladies and gentlemen, and we walked away from the work of 160 nations over 10

years. You wonder, Nikki, why it is that people don't like us in some parts of the world. You just say, "Hey, we don't agree with you. Goodbye." The President has done nothing to try to fix it. I will.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, the next question is for you. It involves jobs, which is a topic in the news today. And for the question, we're going to turn to Jane Barrow.

Trade Competitiveness/Jobs/Taxes

Jane Barrow. Senator Kerry, how can the U.S. be competitive in a manufacturing given——in manufacturing, excuse me, given the wage necessary and comfortably accepted for American workers to maintain the standard of living that they expect?

Senator Kerry. Jane, there are a lot of ways to be competitive. And unfortunately, again, I regret, this administration has not seized them and embraced them. Let me give you an example. There's a tax loophole right now—if you're a company in St. Louis working, trying to make jobs here, there's actually an incentive for you to go away. You get more money—you can keep more of your taxes by going abroad. I'm going to shut that loophole, and I'm going to give the tax benefit to the companies that stay here in America to help make them more competitive.

Secondly, we're going to create a manufacturing jobs credit and a new jobs credit for people to be able to help hire and be more competitive here in America.

Third, what's really hurting American business, more than anything else, is the cost of health care. Now, you didn't hear any plan from the President, because he doesn't have a plan to lower the cost of health care. Five million Americans have lost their health care; 620,000 Missourians have no health care at all; 96,000 Missourians have lost their health care under President Bush.

I have a plan to cover those folks, and it's a plan that lowers costs for everybody, covers all children. And the way I pay for it—I'm not fiscally irresponsible—is I roll back the tax cut that this President so fiercely wants to defend, the one for him and me and Charlie. I think you ought to get the break. I want to lower your cost of health care.

I want to fully fund education, No Child Left Behind, special needs education. And that's how we're going to be more competitive, by making sure our kids are graduating from school and college. China and India are graduating more graduates in technology and science than we are. We've got to create the products of the future.

That's why I have a plan for energy independence within 10 years. And we're going to put our laboratories and our colleges and universities to work, and we're going to get the great entrepreneurial spirit of this country, and we're going to free ourselves from this dependency on Mideast oil. That's how you create jobs and become competitive.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, minute and a half.

President Bush. Let me start with how to control the costs of health care: Medical liability reform, for starters, which he's opposed. Secondly, allow small businesses to pool together so they can share risk and buy insurance at the same discounts big businesses get to do. Thirdly, spread what's called health savings accounts. It's good for small businesses, good for owners. You own your own account. You can save tax-free. You get a catastrophic plan to help you—own it. This is different from saying, "Okay, let me incent you to go on the Government."

He's talking about his plan to keep jobs here. You know, he calls it an outsourcing—to keep—stop outsourcing. Robert Rubin looked at his plan and said it won't work. The best way to keep jobs here in America is, one, have an energy plan. I proposed one to the Congress 2 years ago. It encourages conservation, encourages technology to explore for environmentally friendly ways for coal and use coal and gas. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's stuck in the Senate. He and his runningmate didn't show up to vote when they could have got it going in the Senate. Less regulations if we want jobs here. Legal reform if we want jobs here. And we've got to keep taxes low.

Now, he says he's only going to tax the rich. Do you realize 900,000 small businesses will be taxed under his plan because most small businesses are Subchapter S corps or limited partnerships, and they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And so when you're running up the taxes like that, you're

taxing job creators, and that's not how you keep jobs here.

Mr. Gibson. Senator, I want to extend for a minute. You talk about tax credits to stop outsourcing. But when you have IBM documents that I saw recently, where you can hire a programmer for $12 in China, $56 an hour here, tax credits won't cut it in that area.

Senator Kerry. You can't stop all outsourcing, Charlie. I've never promised that. I'm not going to, because that would be pandering. You can't. But what you can do is create a fair playing field, and that's what I'm talking about.

But let me just address what the President just said. Ladies and gentlemen, that's just not true, what he said. The Wall Street Journal said 96 percent of small businesses are not affected at all by my plan. And you know why he gets that count? The President got $84 from a timber company that he owns, and he's counted as a small business. Dick Cheney is counted as a small business. That's how they do things. That's just not right.

President Bush. I own a timber company? That's news to me. [*Laughter*] Need some wood? [*Laughter*]

Most small businesses are Subchapter S corps. They just are. I met Grant Milliron, Mansfield, Ohio. He's creating jobs. Most small businesses—70 percent of the new jobs in America are created by small business. His taxes are going up when you run up the top two brackets. It's a fact.

Mr. Gibson. President Bush, the next question is for you, and it comes from Rob Fowler, who I believe is over in this area.

PATRIOT Act

Rob Fowler. President Bush, 45 days after 9/11, Congress passed the PATRIOT Act, which takes away checks on law enforcement and weakens American citizens' rights and freedoms, especially Fourth Amendment rights. With expansions of the PATRIOT Act and PATRIOT Act II, my question to you is, why are my rights being watered down and my citizens around me, and what are the specific justifications for these reforms?

President Bush. Yes, I appreciate that. I really don't think your rights are being watered down. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't support it if I thought that. Every action being taken against terrorists requires a court order, requires scrutiny. As a matter of fact, the tools now given to the terrorist fighters are the same tools that we've been using against drug dealers and white-collar criminals. So I really don't think so. I hope you don't think that. I mean, I—because I think whoever is the President must guard your liberties, must not erode your rights in America.

The PATRIOT Act is necessary, for example, because parts of the FBI couldn't talk to each other. Intelligence gathering and the law enforcement arms of the FBI just couldn't share intelligence under the old law, and that didn't make any sense. Our law enforcement must have every tool necessary to find and disrupt terrorists at home and abroad before they hurt us again. That's the task of the 21st century.

And so I don't think the PATRIOT Act abridges your rights at all, and I know it's necessary. I can remember being in upstate New York talking to FBI agents that helped bust the Lackawanna cell up there. And they told me they could not have performed their duty, the duty we all expect of them, if they did not have the ability to communicate with each other under the PATRIOT Act.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Former Governor Racicot, as chairman of the Republican Party, said he thought that the PATRIOT Act has to be changed and fixed. Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner—he's the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee—has said over his dead body before it gets renewed without being thoroughly rechecked. Whole bunch of folks in America concerned about the way the PATRIOT Act has been applied.

In fact, the Inspector General of the Justice Department found that John Ashcroft had twice applied it in ways that were inappropriate. People's rights have been abused. I met a man who spent 8 months in prison, wasn't even allowed to call his lawyer, wasn't allowed to—finally, Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois intervened and was able to get him out. This is in our country, folks, the United States of America. They've got sneak-and-peak searches that are allowed. They've got people allowed to go into churches now and

political meetings, without any showing of potential criminal activity or otherwise.

Now, I voted for the PATRIOT Act. Ninety-nine United States Senators voted for it. And the President has been very busy running around the country using what I just described to you as a reason to say I'm wishy-washy, that I'm a flip-flopper. Now, that's not a flip-flop. I believe in the PATRIOT Act. We need the things in it that coordinate the FBI and the CIA. We need to be stronger on terrorism. But you know what we also need to do as Americans is never let the terrorists change the Constitution of the United States in a way that disadvantages our rights.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, the next question is for you, and it comes from Elizabeth Long.

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Elizabeth Long. Senator Kerry, thousands of people have already been cured or treated by the use of adult stem cells or umbilical cord stem cells. However, no one has been cured by using embryonic stem cells. Wouldn't it be wise to use stem cells obtained without the destruction of an embryo?

Senator Kerry. You know, Elizabeth, I really respect your—the feeling that's in your question. I understand it. I know the morality that's prompting that question, and I respect it enormously. But like Nancy Reagan and so many other people—you know, I was at a forum with Michael J. Fox the other day in New Hampshire, who's suffering from Parkinson's, and he wants us to do stem cell—embryonic stem cell. And this fellow stood up, and he was quivering. His whole body was shaking from the nerve disease, the muscular disease that he had, and he said to me and to the whole hall, he said, you know, "Don't take away my hope because my hope is what keeps me going." Chris Reeve is a friend of mine. Chris Reeve exercises every single day to keep those muscles alive for the day when he believes he can walk again, and I want him to walk again.

I think we can save lives. Now, I think we can do ethically guided embryonic stem cell research. We have 100,000 to 200,000 embryos that are frozen in nitrogen today from fertility clinics. These weren't taken from abortion or something like that. They're from a fertility clinic, and they're either going to be destroyed or left frozen. And I believe if we have the option, which scientists tell us we do, of curing Parkinson's, curing diabetes, curing some kind of a paraplegic or quadriplegic or a spinal cord injury, anything—that's the nature of the human spirit. I think it is respecting life to reach for that cure. I think it is respecting life to do it in an ethical way.

And the President's chosen a policy that makes it impossible for our scientists to do that. I want the future, and I think we have to grab it.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, a minute and a half.

President Bush. Embryonic stem cell research requires the destruction of life to create a stem cell. I'm the first President ever to allow funding, Federal funding, for embryonic stem cell research. I did so because I too hope that we'll discover cures from the stem cells and from the research derived.

But I think we've got to be very careful in balancing the ethics and the science. And so I made the decision we wouldn't spend any more money beyond the 70 lines, 22 of which are now in action, because science is important but so is ethics, so is balancing life. To destroy life to save life is one of the real ethical dilemmas that we face.

There is going to be hundreds of experiments off the 22 lines that now exist, that are active, and hopefully we find a cure. But as well we need to continue to pursue adult stem cell research. I helped double the NIH budget to $28 billion a year to find cures. And the approach I took is one that I think is a balanced and necessary approach, to balance science and the concerns for life.

Mr. Gibson. Senator, thirty seconds, let's extend.

Senator Kerry. When you talk about walking a waffle line, he says he's allowed it, which means he's going to allow the destruction of life up to a certain amount, and then he isn't going to allow it. Now, I don't know how you draw that line. But let me tell you pointblank, the lines of stem cells that he's made available, every scientist in the country will tell you, "Not adequate," because they're contaminated by mouse cells and because there aren't 60 or 70; there are

only about 11 to 20 now, and there aren't enough to be able to do the research because they're contaminated.

We've got to open up the possibilities of this research. And when I am President, I'm going to do it, because we have to.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President.

President Bush. Let me make sure you understand my decision. Those stem cell lines already existed. The embryo had already been destroyed prior to my decision. I had to make the decision: Do we destroy more life; do we continue to destroy life? I made the decision to balance science and ethics.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, the next question is for you, and it comes from Jonathan Michaelson.

Supreme Court

Jonathan Michaelson. Mr. President, if there were a vacancy in the Supreme Court and you had the opportunity to fill that position today, who would you choose, and why?

President Bush. I'm not telling. [*Laughter*] I really don't have—I haven't picked anybody yet. Plus, I want them all voting for me. [*Laughter*] I would pick somebody who would not allow their personal opinion to get in the way of the law. I would pick somebody who would strictly interpret the Constitution of the United States.

Let me give you a couple of examples, I guess, of the kind of person I wouldn't pick. I wouldn't pick a judge who said that the Pledge of Allegiance couldn't be said in a school because it had the words "under God" in it. I think that's an example of a judge allowing personal opinion to enter into the decisionmaking process, as opposed to strict interpretation of the Constitution.

Another example would be the *Dred Scott* case, which is where judges years ago said that the Constitution allowed slavery because of personal property rights. That's personal opinion. That's not what the Constitution says. The Constitution of the United States says we're all—it doesn't say that. It doesn't speak to the equality of America.

And so I would pick people that would be strict constructionists. We've got plenty of lawmakers in Washington, DC. Legislators make law. Judges interpret the Constitution. And I suspect one of us will have a pick at the end of next year—next 4 years. And that's the kind of judge I'm going to put on there—no litmus test except for how they interpret the Constitution.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. Thank you, Charlie. A few years ago, when he came to office, the President said—these are his words—"What we need are some good conservative judges on the courts." And he said also that his two favorite Justices are Justice Scalia and Justice Thomas. So you get a pretty good sense of where he's heading if he were to appoint somebody.

Now, here's what I believe. I don't believe we need a good conservative judge, and I don't believe we need a good liberal judge. I don't believe we need a good judge of that kind of definition on either side. I subscribe to the Justice Potter Stewart standard. He was a Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States, and he said the mark of a good judge, a good Justice, is that when you're reading their decision, their opinion, you can't tell if it's written by a man or a woman, a liberal or a conservative, a Muslim, a Jew, or a Christian. You just know you're reading a good judicial decision.

What I want to find, if I'm privileged to have the opportunity to do it—and the Supreme Court of the United States is at stake in this race, ladies and gentlemen, the future of things that matter to you in terms of civil rights, what kind of Justice Department you'll have, whether we'll enforce the law, will we have equal opportunity, will women's rights be protected, will we have equal pay for women, which is going backwards, will a woman's right to choose be protected. These are constitutional rights, and I want to make sure we have judges who interpret the Constitution of the United States according to the law.

Mr. Gibson. Going to go to the final two questions, now. And the first one will be for Senator Kerry, and this comes from Sarah Degenhart.

Federal Funding of Abortions

Sarah Degenhart. Senator Kerry, suppose you are speaking with a voter who believed abortion is murder, and the voter

asked for reassurance that his or her tax dollars would not go to support abortion. What would you say to that person?

Senator Kerry. I would say to that person exactly what I will say to you right now. First of all, I cannot tell you how deeply I respect the belief about life and when it begins. I'm a Catholic, raised a Catholic. I was an altar boy. Religion has been a huge part of my life. It helped lead me through a war, leads me today. But I can't take what is an article of faith for me and legislate it for someone who doesn't share that article of faith, whether they be agnostic, atheist, Jew, Protestant, whatever. I can't do that.

But I can counsel people. I can talk reasonably about life and about responsibility. I can talk to people, as my wife, Teresa, does, about making other choices and about abstinence and about all these other things that we ought to do as a responsible society. But as a President, I have to represent all the people in the Nation, and I have to make that judgment.

Now, I believe that you can take that position and not be pro-abortion. But you have to afford people their constitutional rights. And that means being smart about allowing people to be fully educated, to know what their options are in life, and making certain that you don't deny a poor person the right to be able to have whatever the Constitution affords them if they can't afford it otherwise.

That's why I think it's important. That's why I think it's important for the United States, for instance, not to have this rigid ideological restriction on helping families around the world to be able to make a smart decision about family planning. You'll help prevent AIDS. You'll help prevent unwanted children, unwanted pregnancies. You'll actually do a better job, I think, of passing on the moral responsibility that is expressed in your question, and I truly respect it.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, a minute and a half.

President Bush. Trying to decipher that. [*Laughter*] My answer is we're not going to spend Federal taxpayers' money on abortion. This is an issue that divides America, but certainly reasonable people can agree on how to reduce abortions in America. I signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. It's a brutal practice. It's one way to help reduce abortions. My opponent voted against the ban. I think there ought to be parental notification laws. He's against them. I signed a bill called the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. In other words, if you're a mom and you're pregnant, you get killed, the murderer gets tried for two cases, not just one. My opponent was against that. These are reasonable ways to help promote a culture of life in America.

I think it is a worthy goal in America to have every child protected by law and welcomed in life. I also think we ought to continue to have good adoption law as an alternative to abortion. And we need to promote maternity group homes, which my administration has done. Culture of life is really important for a country to have if it's going to be a hospitable society.

Thank you.

Mr. Gibson. Senator, do you want to follow up? Thirty seconds.

Senator Kerry. Well, again, the President just said categorically, "My opponent is against this. My opponent is against that." It's just not that simple. No, I'm not. I'm against the partial-birth abortion, but you've got to have an exception for the life of the mother and the health of the mother under the strictest test of bodily injury to the mother. Secondly, with respect to parental notification, I'm not going to require a 16- or 17-year old kid who's been raped by her father and who's pregnant to have to notify her father. So you've got to have a judicial intervention. And because they didn't have a judicial intervention where she could go somewhere and get help, I voted against it. It's never quite as simple as the President wants you to believe.

Mr. Gibson. And 30 seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. It's pretty simple when they say, "Are you for a ban on partial-birth abortion? Yes or no." And he was given a chance to vote, and he voted no. And that's just the way it is. That's a vote. It came right up. It's clear for everybody to see. And as I said, you can run, but you can't hide. It's the reality.

Mr. Gibson. And the final question of the evening will be addressed to President Bush,

and it will come from Linda Grabel. Linda Grabel is over here.

President Bush. Put a head fake on.

Mr. Gibson. I got faked out, myself. [*Laughter*]

Presidential Decisionmaking/Funding U.S. Troops

Linda Grabel. President Bush, during the last 4 years, you have made thousands of decisions that have affected millions of lives. Please give three instances in which you came to realize you had made a wrong decision, and what you did to correct it. Thank you.

President Bush. I have made a lot of decisions, some of them little, like appointments to a board you've never heard of, and some of them big. And in a war, there's a lot of tactical decisions that historians will look back and say, "You shouldn't have done that. You shouldn't have made that decision." And I'll take responsibility for them. I'm human.

But on the big questions about whether or not we should have gone into Afghanistan, the big question about whether we should have removed somebody in Iraq, I'll stand by those decisions because I think they're right. That's really what you're—when they ask about the mistakes, that's what they're talking about. They're trying to say, "Did you make a mistake going into Iraq?" And the answer is absolutely not. It was the right decision.

The Duelfer report confirmed that decision today, because what Saddam Hussein was doing was trying to get rid of sanctions so he could reconstitute a weapons program, and the biggest threat facing America is terrorists with weapons of mass destruction. We knew he hated us. We knew he had been a—invaded other countries. We knew he tortured his own people.

On the tax cut, it's a big decision. I did the right decision. Our recession was one of the shallowest in modern history.

Now, you ask what mistakes—I made some mistakes in appointing people, but I'm not going to name them. I don't want to hurt their feelings on national TV. But history will look back, and I'm fully prepared to accept any mistakes that history judges to my administration. Because the President makes the decisions, the President has to take the responsibility.

Mr. Gibson. Senator Kerry, a minute and a half.

Senator Kerry. I believe the President made a huge mistake, a catastrophic mistake, not to live up to his own standard, which was build a true global coalition, give the inspectors time to finish their job, and go through the U.N. process to its end and go to war as a last resort.

I ask each of you just to look into your hearts, look into your guts—gut-check time. Was this really going to war as a last resort? The President rushed our Nation to war without a plan to win the peace, and simple things weren't done. That's why Senator Lugar says "incompetent" in the delivery of services. That's why Senator Hagel, Republican, says, "beyond pitiful, beyond embarrassing, in the zone of dangerous."

We didn't guard 850,000 tons of ammo. That ammo is now being used against our kids. Ten thousand out of twelve thousand Humvees aren't armored. I've visited some of those kids with no limbs today because they didn't have the armor on those vehicles. They didn't have the right body armor. I've met parents who've, on the Internet, gotten the armor to send their kids.

There's no bigger judgment for a President of the United States than how you take a nation to war. And you can't say, "Because Saddam might have done it 10 years from now, that's a reason." That's an excuse.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President.

President Bush. He complains about the fact our troops don't have adequate equipment, yet he voted against the $87 billion supplemental I sent to the Congress and then issued one of the most amazing quotes in political history: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Saddam Hussein was a risk to our country, ma'am. And he was a risk that—and this is where we just have a difference of opinion. The truth of the matter is, if you listen carefully: Saddam would still be in power if he were the President of the United States, and the world would be "a lot better off."

Mr. Gibson. And Senator Kerry, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Not necessarily be in power. But here's what I'll say about the 87 billion: I made a mistake in the way I talked about it. He made a mistake in invading Iraq. Which is a worse decision?

Now, I voted the way I voted because I saw that he had the policy wrong, and I wanted accountability. I didn't want to give a slush fund to Halliburton. I also thought the wealthiest people in America ought to pay for it, ladies and gentlemen. He wants your kids to pay for it. I wanted us to pay for it, since we're at war. I don't think that's a bad decision.

Closing Statements

Mr. Gibson. That's going to conclude the questioning. We're going to go now to closing statements, 2 minutes from each candidate. And the first closing statement goes to Senator Kerry. I believe that was the agreement.

President Bush. Go ahead. Actually——

Senator Kerry. You want to go first?

President Bush. Either way. [*Laughter*]

Senator Kerry. Thank you. Charlie, thank you. And thank you all. Thank you, all of you, for taking part; thanks for your questions tonight very, very much.

Obviously, the President and I both have very strong convictions. I respect him for that, but we have a very different view about how to make America stronger and safer. I will never cede the authority of our country or our security to any other nation. I'll never give a veto of American security to any other entity, not a nation, not a country, not an institution. But I know, as I think you do, that our country is strongest when we lead the world, when we lead strong alliances. And that's the way Eisenhower and Reagan and Kennedy and others did it. We are not doing that today. We need to.

I have a plan that will help us go out and kill and find the terrorists, and I will not stop in our effort to hunt down and kill the terrorists. But I also have a better plan on how we're going to deal with Iraq, training the Iraqi forces more rapidly, getting our allies back to the table with a fresh start, with new credibility, with a President whose judgment the rest of the world trusts.

In addition to that, I believe we have a crisis here at home, a crisis of the middle class that is increasingly squeezed, health care costs going up. I have a plan to provide health care to all Americans. I have a plan to provide for our schools so we keep the standards, but we help our teachers teach and elevate our schools by funding No Child Left Behind. I have a plan to protect the environment so that we leave this place in better shape to our children than we were handed it by our parents. That's the test.

I believe America's best days are ahead of us. I'm an optimist. But we have to make the right choices, to be fiscally responsible and to create the new jobs of the future. We can do this. And I ask you for the privilege of leading our Nation to be stronger at home and respected again in the world.

Thank you.

Mr. Gibson. Senator. And a closing statement from President Bush.

President Bush. Charlie, thanks. Thank you all very much. It's been enjoyable.

The great contest for the Presidency is about the future, who can lead, who can get things done. We've been through a lot together as a country, been through a recession, corporate scandals, war. And yet, think about where we are. We added 1.9 million new jobs over the past 13 months. The farm income in America is high. Small businesses are flourishing. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We're on the move.

Tonight I had a chance to discuss with you what to do to keep this economy going: Keep the taxes low, don't increase the scope of the Federal Government, keep regulations down, legal reform, a health care policy that does not empower the Federal Government but empowers individuals, and an energy plan that will help us become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

And abroad, we're at war, and it requires a President who is steadfast and strong and determined. I vowed to the American people after that fateful day of September the 11th that we would not rest nor tire until we're safe. The 9/11 Commission put out a report that said America is safer, but not yet safe. There's more work to be done. We'll stay on the hunt on Al Qaida. We'll deny sanctuary to these terrorists. We'll make sure they do not end up with weapons of mass destruction. The great nexus, the great threat to our

country is that these haters end up with weapons of mass destruction.

But our long-term security depends on our deep faith in liberty. We'll continue to promote freedom around the world. Freedom is on the march. Tomorrow Afghanistan will be voting for a President. In Iraq, we'll be having free elections, and a free society will make this world more peaceful.

God bless.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President and Senator Kerry. That concludes tonight's debate.

I want to give you a reminder that the third and final debate, on issues of domestic policy, will be held next Wednesday, October 13th, at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, hosted by Bob Schieffer of CBS News.

I want to thank President Bush and Senator Kerry for tonight. I want to thank these citizens of the St. Louis area who asked the questions, who gave so willingly of their time, and who took their responsibility very seriously. Thank you also to everyone at Washington. I want to thank everyone at Washington University in St. Louis for being such gracious hosts.

I'm Charles Gibson from ABC News. From St. Louis, good night.

NOTE: The debate began at 8:02 p.m. in the Field House at Washington University. In his remarks, the President referred to former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; Finance Minister Adil Abd al-Mahdi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland. The President also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). Senator Kerry referred to Marc Racicot, former chairman, Republican National Committee; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; King Abdullah II of Jordan; Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, USA, (Ret.), former Army Chief of Staff; Hans Blix, former Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC); Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, (Ret.), former chief, National Guard Bureau; and actors Michael J. Fox and Christopher Reeve. Senator Kerry also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30. The names of participants who asked questions of the candidates were taken from the transcript produced by the Commission on Presidential Debates. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Debate Watch Party in Ballwin, Missouri

October 8, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for staying up so late. Anybody got any questions? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love Laura!

The President. Thank you all for coming. Laura said, "Don't talk too long tonight." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] But I do want to thank you all very much. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Missouri again and win in November.

So tonight I was telling the people why I think they ought to put me back in there for 4 more years, but I didn't get the line I really wanted to say, which was that the main reason to put me back in was so that Laura would be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

Audience member. We love you, Laura!

The President. Tomorrow morning, I'm waking up first thing in the morning to help the next Governor of Missouri, Matt Blunt, and the next Lieutenant Governor of Missouri, Peter Kinder. I want to thank them both. See you in the morning. I'll see you in the morning. Make sure the eggs aren't runny. [*Laughter*]

Then we're off to Iowa, then Minnesota. I'm fired up. I'm looking forward to this.

I thank all the candidates who are here. I really want to thank those of you who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls and doing all the work.

We had a good debate tonight. There's clear differences of opinion. One thing I hope you could tell is I know what I believe. I know why I need to lead this country to make this world a safer place and a more hopeful place for every American—for every single American.

Our dream is for America to fulfill its promise for every single person who lives here. There's no doubt in my mind, over the next 4 years this world will be a safer place, that we'll achieve the peace that we long for, for our children and grandchildren, and that the great promise of America, the great hope of our great country will be extended to every corner of this great land.

I can't thank you all enough for being here.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:26 p.m. at the Greensfelder Recreation Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt, candidate for Missouri Governor; and Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Breakfast for Gubernatorial Candidate Matt Blunt in St. Louis, Missouri

October 9, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. I appreciate that kind introduction, Governor. [*Laughter*] He said, "Are you doing anything for breakfast?" [*Laughter*] I said, "Waking up." [*Laughter*] He said, "Why don't you come by and have some eggs with some friends." [*Laughter*] I said, "More than happy to." I want to thank you all for coming. With your help, Matt Blunt will be the next Governor for the great State of Missouri.

It's good to be back in St. Louis, home of the mighty Cardinals. You might remember opening day. [*Laughter*] The Cardinals had a great season after that. I can't claim any credit—[*laughter*]—although I've always wanted to lead a baseball team into the playoffs. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud to be traveling with Laura. She is a—so when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. The American people have seen her speak and have come to know her as a strong, compassionate, great First Lady. We're off to Iowa and then Minnesota. And I'm going to remind the people of those States, like I'm reminding everybody, there's some reasons to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will have 4 more years.

We got a great family. I'm proud to be with my Uncle Bucky Bush and my Aunt Patty Bush. Thank you for your love and compassion.

I want to thank Melanie Blunt for her willingness to serve the State of Missouri as the next first lady of Missouri. Besides Matt, you've got another fine Missourian on the ticket, running for Federal office, and that's Kit Bond. You need to put him back into office. He's a great Senator. I know Brenda Talent is here. I appreciate you being here, Brenda. Thank you for coming. You know, that fine husband of yours, I didn't hold it against him that he missed another one of my speeches, but he's heard a lot of them before. [*Laughter*] He's doing a great job, and I know you're proud of him. I know the people of Missouri are proud of him as well. Congressman Todd Akin—I don't know if Todd made it this morning or not, but I'm proud of the job he's doing for the people of this area of Missouri.

I saw Peter Kinder last night. I don't know if Pete is here, but he's going to make a great Lieutenant Governor for the State of Missouri. Yes, Peter, thank you for coming. You've come a long way for a country boy. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Catherine Hanaway, who's going to be the next secretary of state for the great State of Missouri.

I want to thank Ann Wagner, who has done such a fine job as the cochairman of the RNC and as the chairman of the Missouri Republican Party. Thank you for being here, Annie, it's good to see you. I want to thank my friend Sam Fox and Marilyn Fox for helping to organize this breakfast today. And I want to thank you all for joining the Foxes in supporting this good man, Matt Blunt for Governor.

I know Sarah Steelman is here, running for State treasurer, and Chris Byrd, running

for attorney general. Thank you both for running. Good luck. I'm all for you.

But most of all, thank you all for coming. Thank you for being here. Thank you for what you're going to do, which is turn out the vote. And thanks for supporting Matt. It takes a lot of work to get 750 people to show up for breakfast. [*Laughter*] It's a great organizational effort. And I want to thank Matt's friends for putting this breakfast on. It's an important election here in Missouri. Matt has everything it takes to lead this State.

In 2001, he became the first statewide elected official in Missouri history to be called up to active duty. Think about that. He served his Nation with honor in the United States Navy. He's still a member of the Navy Reserves, and I'm proud to be his Commander in Chief. He knows people in the "Show Me" State want Government that gets results, not Government that just spends money.

For the last 4 years, Matt has been getting results as the secretary of the state. He's a results-oriented person. That's what you need in your statehouse. I know something about being a Governor. I was one once. [*Laughter*] A Governor's job is to get things done for the people of their State, and that's what he's going to do as your Governor.

His top priority is education, and that's the way it should be. Anybody running for Governor must make sure the education of the State is the top priority. I used to say in Texas, education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. Matt understands that, and he believes that. He's got good plans and good visions for the schools of this State. He'll make sure school funding gets to the teachers and the classrooms, so not any child, not one child is left behind in this State. He'll make sure this great State continues to create jobs. He understands that a good economy is one in which the farmers and ranchers do well.

And he'll do something else, what's needed. The high cost of medicine is making it hard for small businesses to expand, for people to keep their health care. He understands like I understand, these frivolous lawsuits are driving good doctors out of business and driving up your cost of medicine.

We both share a commitment to keep our economy growing and to keep the people safe. We have some things in common. We're both in the same line of work as our dads. [*Laughter*] But all the good advice comes from our mothers. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Matt's mom for being here. Roseanne, great to see you. God bless you.

We share the same values. We stand for a culture of life, which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We believe in the power of faith, and we stand with the armies of compassion. We stand for judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. These values are shared by Republicans and Democrats and independents all over the State of Missouri. When the people of Missouri elect Matt Blunt, you'll get a Governor who stands up for those values every single day. Let's get him in office.

We're getting close to voting time here in this country. But who's counting the days? [*Laughter*] There was voting time elsewhere in this world today. A marvelous thing is happening in Afghanistan. Freedom is powerful. Think about a society in which young girls couldn't go to school and their mothers were whipped in the public square. And today they're holding a Presidential election.

The first person to vote in the Presidential election, 3 years after the Taliban ruled that country with such barbarism, was a 19-year-old woman, an Afghan refugee who fled her homeland during the civil war. Here's what she said: "I cannot explain my feelings, just how happy I am. I would never have thought I would be able to vote in this election." She's voting in this election because the United States of America believes that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. And today is an appropriate day for Americans to remember and thank the men and women of our Armed Forces who liberated Afghanistan.

The people of Australia voted today as well. And I want to congratulate my good friend Prime Minister John Howard, who won a great victory.

Laura and I are here to ask for people's vote. We believe you've got to get out

amongst the people and say, "I want your vote. I want your support." I'm looking forward to coming down the stretch, traveling this great country, talking about a strong and positive message for our country. I've worked hard to make this country more hopeful and secure. I've led our country with principle and resolve, and that's how I'll lead this country for the next 4 years.

It was good to be back at Washington University. If I spend any more time there, they might give me an honorary degree. [*Laughter*] But I enjoyed that debate last night, and I really appreciated the questions from the people of Missouri. They were good questions. And they helped highlight some fundamental differences on issues from jobs to taxes to health care to national security.

Much as he tried to obscure it, on issue after issue, my opponent showed why he's earned the ranking, the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And several of the statements just don't pass the credibility test.

With a straight face, he said, "I've only had one position on Iraq." He must think we've been on another planet. [*Laughter*] In the spring of 2003, as I ordered the invasion of Iraq, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It's the wrong war." And he tries to tell us he's had only one position. Who is he trying to kid? He can run, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." [*Laughter*] Eight out of ten people who would get health insurance under Senator Kerry's plan will be placed on a Government program. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Then Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera—[*laughter*]—and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets will raise 600 billion by our count, 800 billion by his. But his health care plan alone costs more than $1.2 trillion. He can't have it both ways. To pay for the big spending program he's outlined during his campaign, he will have to raise your taxes. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Much of what my opponent said last night is contradicted by his own record, 20 years of votes that earned him the "most liberal" label. He voted 98 times to raise taxes, more than 200 times to break spending caps. He voted against tort reform, although last night he tried to claim he now supports it. On national security, he has a voting record—a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America's intelligence budget by $7.5 billion.

And now he says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security. The problem is, Senator Kerry's own record shows we can never pass that test. In 1991, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition. Yet in the United States Senate after the Security Council resolution, Senator Kerry voted "no." I have a different view. I'll work with our allies. I'll continue to build a strong coalition, but I will never allow other nations to veto America's national security decisions.

After listening to the litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, I did all I could not to make a bad face. [*Laughter*] We got a better way to make sure this country is more hopeful and more safe.

When you're out counting—rounding up the votes, remind people what we've been through. We've been through a recession. And by the way, the stock market started to decline 6 months before I became President. And then we had a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. We passed tough laws to make it clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked, and that attack cost us 1 million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But I put the right policies in at the right time at the right place, right here at home. We cut the taxes on the people. We gave the people more money to stimulate consumption and encourage in investment. And because we acted, the recession we faced was

one of the shortest in history. America is on the move.

Yesterday we learned we've created 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. We're on the move. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Farm income is up. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America.

There is more to do. To make sure jobs stay here in America and this economy grows, we need less regulations on our job creators. We need legal reform in America. We need to make sure we have an energy plan that encourages consumption, that works with renewables, that explores for coal by using technologies to protect our air. To make sure jobs are here in America, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To make sure jobs remain here, we got to reject economic isolationism. You know, we open up our markets for goods from overseas, and that's good for consumers. If you have more goods to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. That's why I'm saying to China, "You treat us the way we treat you. Level the playing field." And I believe strongly that America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure we continue to grow this economy, we got to make sure our people get educated. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I knew something about public schools because I was the Governor of a State. I knew that people in leadership positions had to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, a system that just quit on certain kids, a system that thought certain kids couldn't learn so they just shuffled them through, grade after grade, year after year. We let down too many families with that kind of attitude.

Yes, we've increased spending at the Federal level, but excellence in the classrooms requires more than just spending increases. It requires a change of attitude. We've raised the standards. We now measure early, so we can solve problems before it's too late. We believe every child can learn, and when we find a problem, we provide extra resources. And guess what's happening in America. There was an achievement—there is an achievement gap in America, but it's closing. It's closing because the system now focuses on each child, provides resources for each child, and will not let any child get behind in America.

There's more to do. There's more to do. We got—in a changing world, most new jobs require a college degree, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why I believe in intermediate help in high schools for at-risk students. That's why I know we got to put math and science in place. That's why I'm for extending Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, so more of our people start their career with a college diploma.

And in a changing world, the skill sets required for jobs in the 21st century change as well. That's why I'm a big believer in the community college systems, to make sure our workers have got the capacity to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

No, there's more to do. We've done a lot. We've had a record of accomplishment. But the only reason to look back is to tell the people I'm going to do what I'm telling you I'm going to do. The only reason to look back at the record is to say, "This man intends to accomplish more for the American people."

We got to make sure our health care system is available and affordable. I remember campaigning here in 2000, going to a community health center right here in St. Louis, Missouri. I saw the compassionate care being delivered to the people there, to those who can't afford insurance, to those who need help. I'm a big believer in community health centers to help the poor and the indigent. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. I believe we ought to extend and expand the low-income health program—the health program for low-income children. I know to make sure health care is more affordable, we must allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies can. I strongly believe we need to expand health

savings accounts, tax-free accounts, coupled with catastrophic care, so workers have got more affordable health care, so small businesses can better afford health care.

I know we need to introduce technologies into the medical system to wring out the inefficiencies in the system to reduce the cost of health care. And I agree with Matt Blunt: In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we need medical liability reform—now. I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time.

No, there's more to do to make sure America is a hopeful place, and there's more to do to make sure America is a safer place as well. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming and strengthening the All-Volunteer Army—and we will keep it an all-volunteer army. We're making sure we got the best intelligence in the world. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll continue to work for freedom and peace in the broader Middle East and around the world. And we'll prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world some 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, because we acted, Afghanistan is fighting terror and holding a Presidential election today; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; a army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's leaders and associates have been brought to justice. We've led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

And we've got more work to do. Over the next 4 years, we'll pursue Al Qaida wherever they hide. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to disrupt the flows of weapons of mass destruction. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to spread freedom.

And that's what's happening in Iraq. Last night I talked about the Finance Minister who came to see me. Let me recount some of that conversation I had with him. I thought it was really interesting and illustrative. He walks in full of confidence. He says, "Mr. President, thank you for what you and your country have done for us. We're headed toward elections."

Think about that statement. A fellow shows up in the Oval Office of the President of the United States and says, "We're headed for elections." For most of us, that doesn't sound like much. But for a person who used to live under the—in a country that was ruled by a brutal tyrant, where there were torture rooms and mass graves, where people had no freedom at all, to say, "We're headed toward elections," is a powerful statement.

And our strategy is clear. We're going to help the Iraqis. We're going to train Iraqis so they can do the hard work necessary for a free society to emerge. It's their country. We just want to stand with them as democracy comes to that piece of the world. And so we're training the troops. We'll have 125,000 police, Iraqi * national army trained up by the end of December. It's an essential part of our strategy. We got $7 billion allocated for reconstruction efforts. We're working with a grand coalition. Some 30 nations are involved there in Iraq.

As an aside, you cannot lead a coalition in Iraq if you tell them, "This is the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time." Imagine my opponent's grand idea of a global summit, and he walks in, and there are the leaders around the world sitting there, waiting for the American President to speak. And he says, "Follow me into a great mistake." Nobody is going to follow. You must have optimism. You must believe in what you're doing if you expect to lead. And I believe in what we're doing in Iraq. And in January, Iraq will have elections, and that's important. You see, I believe in the power of liberty to transform societies.

I tell people all the time about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I was with him at the United Nations a couple of weeks ago, and I said, "I don't know

* White House correction.

if you know this, but I'm traveling the country talking about you and talking about our relationship. Is that okay?" After having done it about 30 times, he had to say yes. [*Laughter*] He said, "Sure." I didn't tell him I was going to tell you his favorite singer is Elvis. [*Laughter*]

But think about that for a minute. He and I are friends, and we're talking about different issues confronting the world. And the reason I say "think about it" is because it wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with Japan. If you're 58 years old, like me, it seems like an eternity. But a lot of people in this country still remember that war. My dad does, Buck's brother. I'm sure you've got dads and granddads who fought against the Japanese. They were our sworn enemy.

And after we were victorious in World War II, Harry S. Truman, from the State of Missouri, believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. And so did a lot of other citizens. Oh, there were some skeptics in those days, and you can understand why. We had just finished a war. A lot of people's lives had been hurt as a result of that war. A lot of Americans had lost a loved one. They weren't interested in worrying about Japan. They were interested in their own souls and their own hearts. I'm sure there was a lot of people here that said, "It's just impossible for an enemy to become a friend." But because my predecessor and other Americans believed in the power of liberty to transform societies, I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace we all want.

We'll get the job done in Iraq. Freedom is powerful. And when we succeed, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace that we all want. And we will have known—this generation of Americans will have known we have done our duty to our children and our grandchildren to leave behind a better world.

The stakes are high. This is an historic opportunity. It's essential that we be resolute and clear in our vision and have faith in the values that make us a great nation. I believe this century will be liberty's century. I know that by spreading freedom abroad, we'll bring the peace. And by spreading freedom at home, opportunity will go into every single corner of this country.

It's my honor to represent you. I look forward to winning this election. I want to thank you for help. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:34 a.m. at the America's Center. In his remarks, he referred to Melanie Blunt, wife of gubernatorial candidate Matt Blunt; Brenda Talent, wife of Senator James M. Talent; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

The President's Radio Address

October 9, 2004

Good morning. As your President, I have led this country with principle and resolve. We have confronted historic challenges and built a broad record of accomplishment. I have proposed and delivered four rounds of tax relief, and our economy is creating jobs again. We have added over 1.9 million jobs in the past 13 months, more than Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and France combined. The unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Thanks to our education reforms, math and reading scores are increasing in public schools. We have strengthened Medicare to help low-income seniors save money on their medicine. And soon every senior will have the option of prescription drug coverage.

We have more to do. We will transform our systems of Government to fit a changing world and to help more people realize the American Dream. We will expand health savings accounts and improve Social Security to allow younger workers to own a piece of their retirement. Because education is vital to our prosperity, we will raise expectations in public schools and invest in community colleges. And to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business and create jobs, we will cut regulations, end junk lawsuits, pass a sound energy policy, and make tax relief permanent.

Senator Kerry takes a very different approach to our economy. He was named the most liberal Member of the United States Senate, and that's a title he has earned. Over the past 20 years, Senator Kerry has voted to raise taxes 98 times. He opposed all our tax relief and voted instead to squeeze an extra $2,000 in taxes from the average middle-class family. Now he's running on an agenda of higher taxes and higher spending and more Government control over American life. My opponent wants to empower Government. I want to use Government to empower people.

Since September the 11th, 2001, I have led a global campaign to protect the American people and bring our enemies to account. We have tripled spending on homeland security and passed the PATRIOT Act to help law enforcement and intelligence stop terrorists inside the United States. We removed terror regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, and now both nations are on the path to democracy. We shut down a black-market supplier of deadly weapons technology and convinced Libya to give up its weapons of mass destruction programs. And more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed.

In the middle of a war, Senator Kerry is proposing policies and doctrines that would weaken America and make the world more dangerous. He's proposed the Kerry doctrine, which would paralyze America by subjecting our national security decisions to a "global test." He supports the International Criminal Court, where unaccountable foreign prosecutors could put American troops on trial in front of foreign judges. And after voting to send our troops into combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, he voted against the body armor and bullets they need to win.

For all of Senator Kerry's shifting positions on Iraq, one thing is clear: If my opponent had his way, Saddam Hussein would be sitting in a palace today, not a prison, and Iraq would still be a danger to America. As chief weapons inspector Charles Duelfer testified this week, and I quote, "Most senior members of the Saddam Hussein regime and scientists assumed that the programs would begin in earnest when sanctions ended, and sanctions were eroding." Instead, because our coalition acted, Iraq is free; America is safer; and the world will be more peaceful for our children and our grandchildren.

I will keep this Nation on the offensive against terrorists, with the goal of total victory. I will keep our economy moving so every worker has a good job, quality health care, and a secure retirement.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:20 a.m. on October 8 at a private residence in St. Louis, MO, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Waterloo, Iowa

October 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for being here. What a beautiful day here in the great State of Iowa. Thanks for coming out to say hello. It's good to be in the home of tall corn, good tractors, and great people. You know, I remember coming to Waterloo quite a few times before—one or two times before, in the 2000 campaign. And it's always good to be back. The crowds are bigger, and so is the entourage. [*Laughter*]

You know, we're getting closer to voting time here, and I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Iowa and win a great victory in November.

Some other people were voting today around the world. As we meet here this morning, a really great thing is happening in Afghanistan. The people of that country, who just 3 years ago were suffering under the brutal regime of the Taliban, are going to the polls to vote for President. Think about that. Just 3 years ago, women were being executed in the sports stadium. Today they're voting for a leader of a free country. A 19-

year-old woman, an Afghan refugee who fled her homeland during its civil war, became the very first voter. Here is what she said. She said, "I cannot explain my feelings, just how happy I am. I would never have thought I would be able to vote in this election." Amazing, isn't it? Freedom is beautiful.

And today is an appropriate day for Americans to remember and thank the men and women of our Armed Forces who liberated Afghanistan.

And earlier today I had the opportunity to call and congratulate my friend the Prime Minister of Australia, who won his election as well. Australia is a great ally in the war on terror, and John Howard is the right man to lead that country.

As you can see, I'm keeping pretty good company today. So I said, "Laura, will you marry me?" She said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. When she speaks, the American people know they're looking at someone who has got great compassion, a great heart. She's a wonderful First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He did a fine job in the debate the other night. I admit, he didn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

Before I came up here, I had the privilege of saying hello to Jay and Patrick Grassley; that would be the son and grandson of a really fine United States Senator. I told him the other day in Des Moines that we've got a big yard there at the White House. [*Laughter*] If he's looking for something to do—[*laughter*]—bring those mowers over. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Congressman Jim Nussle for his leadership. He's a fine, fine, fine leader.

I appreciate Mayor Tim Hurley of Waterloo, Iowa. I appreciate you coming, Mr. Mayor. Now, I understand the mayor didn't ask me for any advice, but I'm going to give him some. [*Laughter*] Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I'm honored you're here, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for your service.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I want to thank the people who are running for office. I want to thank Dave Roederer, who is the Bush-Cheney State campaign chairman. I want to thank Leon Mosley. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank the people who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls, doing the hard work to turn out this vote. I want to thank the Sonny Burgess Band for being here. I'm honored you all are here. Appreciate you coming.

We had a great debate last night. It highlighted some of the fundamental differences on issues from jobs to taxes to health care to our national security. Much as he tried to obscure it, on issue after issue my opponent showed why he earned the ranking of the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. Several of the statements last night simply don't pass the credibility test.

With a straight face, he said, "I have only had one position on Iraq." [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] He must think we've been on another planet. [*Laughter*] In the spring of 2003, as I ordered the invasion of Iraq, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It's the wrong war," and he tries to tell us he's had only one position. He can run, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to health care, his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." Eight out of ten people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program. He can run, but he cannot hide.

And then Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets would raise between $600 billion by our estimates and $800 billion by his. But his health care plan alone costs 1.2 trillion. See, you can't have it both ways. To pay for big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he will have to raise your taxes. He can run, but he cannot hide.

You know, after listening to the litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a bad face. [*Laughter*] Much of what my opponent said last night is contradicted by his own records. Twenty years of votes have earned him the "most liberal" label.

I have a different record and a very different philosophy. I am a compassionate conservative. As your President, I have worked to make America more hopeful and more secure. I have led our country with principle and resolve, and that is how I will lead this Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm looking forward to the campaign coming down the stretch. I like to get out with the people. I like to tell the people what I believe and where I stand. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised standards. We're measuring early, to solve problems before it's too late. We're ending the old practice of just shuffling students through school whether they can read and write and add and subtract. And we're making progress. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back to the old days of failure and mediocrity.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't. For example, Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for heart surgery but wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery in the first place. We worked together with Republicans and Democrats; I worked with Chuck Grassley to make sure Iowa's rural hospitals got help in the Medicare program. We've strengthened and modernized Medicare for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors can get prescription drug coverage. We're helping our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers and small-business owners and farmers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out gathering up the vote, when you're out convincing people to come our way, remind them what we have been through. The stock market was in serious decline 6 months before Dick Cheney and I took office. It was an indication of a recession that was coming, and we went through that recession. Then we had some corporate scandals which affected our economy. We passed tough laws. It's now abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked, and that attack cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months following September the 11th, 2001.

But we acted. We put tax relief in place. And now our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The recession was one of the shallowest in American history. The unemployment rate in America is at 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Iowa is 4.5 percent. The farm economy is strong here in the State of Iowa. More people own a home than ever before in the United States of America. We're moving forward to a more hopeful country, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And with your help, we're going to win.

Any hopeful society has a growing economy, and I've got a plan to keep our economy moving forward. To make sure jobs are here, to make sure people can find work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To keep jobs here, we need to reduce the burden of regulations on our business creators and job creators. To create jobs, we got to stop these junk lawsuits that are

threatening the small businesses which are creating most new jobs in America.

To create jobs, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. My plan encourages conservation. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages new technologies. It encourages clean coal technology. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs here we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here, we got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets around the world for U.S. products, for Iowa farm products. I like it when I hear people around the world are eating Iowa corn or Iowa soybeans. See, I believe that we can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair. And that's why I'm telling countries like China, "You treat us the way we treat you."

To create jobs, we got to be wise about we spend your money. We're going to keep your taxes low. You heard the language last night, "All I'm going to do is tax the rich." We've heard that before in American politics. You know what that means, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to stick you with the tab. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

I'll tell you something else about the Tax Code: It's a complicated mess. It is a million pages long. Americans spend 6 billion hours a year working on their tax returns. In a new term, I'm going to bring people together and simplify this Tax Code and make it more fair for you.

Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's what happens in a changing world. Yet only one in four of our students gets there. That's why in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous examination. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

I'm a big believer in the community college system in America. I believe the community colleges can be used wisely to make sure our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In this time of change, we also need to reform our health care system. We had a spirited debate last night on health care. The differences are clear. When it comes to health care, my opponent wants Government to dictate. I want you to decide. I want you to be the decisionmaker. So we have a plan to make sure health care is available and affordable. I believe in community health centers, places where the poor and indigent can get care. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. I know we got to make sure our programs for low-income children are fully subscribed, to make sure America's health care system works.

But we've got to do more to make sure health care is affordable as well. Listen, most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To more enable people to be able to afford health care, we ought to allow small businesses to pool risk, to join together across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses can do.

To make sure health care is affordable, we've got to expand health savings accounts, so workers and small businesses are able to save on premiums and people can save tax-free for a health care plan they call their own. To make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running up the costs of health care and running good docs out of practice. You can't be pro-patient, pro-doctor, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care, this administration will make sure the health decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

In a time of change, some things don't change. Those are the values we try to live by, courage and compassion and reverence and integrity. In changing times, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a

culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake.

Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. I will make sure the All-Volunteer Army remains the All-Volunteer Army. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, because we understand free societies are peaceful societies. And we'll prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was about 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat. Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, Afghanistan is fighting terror and held a Presidential election today; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression. We knew he harbored terrorists. We knew he hated America. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they come to haunt us, before they hurt us.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the Congress. They looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and they came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they authorized the use of force. Some Members of the Senate want to forget that vote—or want you to forget it.

Before the United States ever commits troops into harm's way, we must try all means to deal with a threat. I understand the consequences of putting troops into combat. I know what it means. And so I went to the United Nations in hopes that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the issue and passed another resolution. And this resolution said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." When an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

The free world gave Saddam Hussein another chance, a final chance, to meet his demands. And as he had for over a decade, he refused the demands of the free world. He systematically deceived inspectors. So I had a choice to make at this point in time: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

We did not find the stockpiles we thought were there. But I want you to remember what the Duelfer report said. It said that Saddam Hussein was gaming the Oil for Food Programme to get rid of sanctions. And why? Because he had the capability and the knowledge to rebuild his weapon programs. And the great danger we face in the world today is that a terrorist organization could end up with weapons of mass destruction. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. The world is safer with Saddam in a prison cell.

Because we acted, freedom is on the march. We know what's happening in Afghanistan. And despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq has got a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are

scheduled for January. We're standing with the people in Afghanistan and in Iraq because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. But we're doing so as well because it will make us safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace.

So our mission in Afghanistan and our mission in Iraq is clear. We'll help those leaders train armies so the people of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending democracy. We will help them get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military, and I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example. And I want to thank the military families who are here today. I want to assure you, we'll keep the commitment I have made to our troops that they will have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why, in September 2003, I went to the Congress and requested $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, and other supplies necessary for our troops in combat in both Afghanistan and in Iraq. It was really important funding. As a matter of fact, we received great bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out talking up this election and reminding people about the difference in this campaign, remind them there were only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against providing the funding for our troops—only four, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember his famous quote, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." I don't suspect a lot of people in Waterloo, Iowa, speak that way. He's given a lot of explanations for that vote. One of my favorites is when he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

On national security, my opponent has a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America's intelligence budget by 7.5 billion after 1993. And now he says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security. The problem is, Senator Kerry's own record shows we can never pass that test. In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition. Yet in the United States Senate, after the Security Council resolution, Senator Kerry voted "no."

Let me tell you how I think the President ought to lead. The President will always work with our friends and allies. We've built strong coalitions. As a matter of fact, I can—I told you I congratulated Prime Minister John Howard today. But I will never allow other nations to veto America's national security decisions.

In the long run, the best way to defend our security is to spread freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I like to tell people about my friend Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I was with him recently in the United Nations in New York. I said, "By the way, I'm campaigning a lot, and I'm talking about you a lot on the campaign trail. Do you mind?" He said, "Not at all." I didn't ask him if I could tell you his favorite singer was Elvis, which it is. What's interesting about my meetings with him is that, one, we get along great, and Laura and I consider him a friend. But we're sitting down with the head of a country that was a sworn enemy of America not so long ago. My dad fought against the Japanese. I just know a lot of people out here's relatives fought against the Japanese. It was a bloody war. But after the war was over, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the transformational power of liberty, believed that liberty could change an enemy into an ally.

Now, there were some people in the United States at that time who didn't agree with that. There were skeptics and pessimists. You can understand why. After a war, there was bitterness about what took place. Some, I'm confident, were saying, "Who cares about the enemy. We won." But fortunately, enough Americans didn't believe that way, and they helped Japan become a democracy. And today, I sit down with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace, talking about the peace that we all want for our children and grandchildren.

We'll succeed in Iraq. We've got a plan that will work. I believe strongly the Iraqi people want to live in a free society, and someday a duly elected leader of Iraq will be sitting down with the President of the United States, talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women want to grow up in a free society and raise their children in a free society. I believe that given a chance, the people in the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve and clear vision and the deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. I'll never forget the workers in hardhats that were yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I will never forget the man who had been in the rubble looking for a friend, who came out and grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

You know, 4 years ago when I traveled your great State in the caucuses and then in the general election, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. I'm honored you're here. Thank you all for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. at Riverfront Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; David Roederer, Iowa State chair, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Leon Mosley, State cochair, Republican Party of Iowa; country music entertainer Sonny Burgess; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in Chanhassen, Minnesota

October 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for being here. What a beautiful day.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. It turns out I am the first sitting President ever to visit Chanhassen, Minnesota. All the other ones missed out on a beautiful part of America. Thank you for coming out today. I'm here asking for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help in getting that vote out. There is no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry Minnesota and win a great victory in November.

We're getting close to voting time here in America, and today a great thing happened in Afghanistan. The people of that country, who just 3 years ago were suffering under the brutal regime of the Taliban, went to the polls to vote for their President. A 19-year-old woman, an Afghan refugee who fled her homeland during its civil war, became the very first voter. It's amazing, isn't it? She said,

"I cannot explain my feelings, just how happy I am. I never would have thought I'd be able to vote in this election." Freedom is beautiful. Freedom is on the march.

So today is an appropriate day for Americans to remember and thank the men and women of America's Armed Forces who liberated Afghanistan. Because of their actions, America is safer, and the world is better off.

Australia had an election as well. And I was honored to call my friend John Howard, the Prime Minister, and congratulate him on a great victory. As you can see, I'm keeping good company today.

So here's the way I like to tell the day I asked Laura to marry me. I said, "Would you marry me?" She said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. Americans, when they see Laura speak, see a compassionate, decent, warm, great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I thought he did a great job in his debate. I admit it, he didn't have the waviest hair on the platform there. Of course, I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience and sound judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud of your Governor, Tim Pawlenty. He's a good Governor, and I'm proud to call him friend.

Plus, I like working with Norm Coleman. He's a fine United States Senator. And I hope you put John Kline back in office, the United States Congressman from this district. They're not here. They're in Washington, still voting. I can't wait for them to get out of town. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the mayor of Chanhassen, Tom Furlong, for being here. I'm proud you're here, Mr. Mayor. One of the things I'm proud of is there's all kinds of Democrats around the country supporting me. People like Zell Miller are supporting my candidacy. But so is my friend, the mayor of St. Paul, Randy Kelly.

I want to thank all the statehouse people who are here. I want to thank the Shooting Star Band. I want to thank all the grassroots activists for what you're going to do. I can see by the signs and the size of this crowd you have done a lot. But it's what you're going to do I want to thank you for, and that is turn out the vote, get people to the polls.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We had an interesting evening last night. It was a great debate. I thought the citizens did a fantastic job of asking good questions, and that debate highlighted some fundamental differences on issues from jobs and taxes and health care and national security. Much as he tried to obscure it, on issue after issue my opponent showed why he earned the ranking of the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And several of his statements just don't pass the credibility test.

With a straight face, he said, "I've only had one position on Iraq." [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] He must have—he must think we're on a different planet. [*Laughter*] In the spring of '03, as I ordered the invasion of Iraq, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It was the wrong war." He tries to tell us he's had only one position. Who's he trying to kid? He can run, but he cannot hide.

Again, with a straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it came to his health care plan, quote, "the Government has nothing to do with it." [*Laughter*] Eight out of ten people who get health insurance under Senator Kerry's plan will be placed on a Government program. He can run, but he cannot hide.

And then Senator Kerry was asked to look in the camera and promise he would not raise taxes on anyone who earns less than 200,000 a year.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I know. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] You see, his plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets will raise $600 billion a year by our estimate and $800 a year by—$800 million by his estimate—will raise $600 billion by our estimate and $800 billion by his estimate. I think I finally got it right. [*Laughter*] But his own health care plan costs $1.2 trillion. So you begin to see the problem. He can't have it both ways. To pay for the big

spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he's going to have to raise your taxes. And he can run, but he cannot hide.

You know, after listening to his litany of complaints and his dour pessimism, it was all I could do not to make a bad face. [*Laughter*] I have a very different philosophy from Senator Kerry. I'm a compassionate conservative. As your President, I've worked to make America more hopeful and more secure. I've led this country with principle and resolve, and that's how I will lead with—the next 4 years.

I'm looking forward to coming back to Minnesota before election day. I'm looking forward to this stretch run. I like to be with people. I like to tell people what I believe and where I stand. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I felt strongly we needed to end this business about just shuffling the kids through, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. We've raised the standards. We measure early to solve problems before it's too late. We trust the local people to make the right choices for their schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back.

I believe our seniors must have a good health care system. I went to Washington to fix problems, not pass them on to future Presidents. I saw a problem in Medicare. Let me give you an example. Medicare would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't right for our seniors. It wasn't right for the taxpayers. We came together and strengthened Medicare for our seniors. Seniors will get prescription drug coverage in 2006, and we're not going to go back.

I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers. That's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out there gathering up the vote, remind people what we've been through, what this economy has been through. Six months prior to our arrival in Washington, DC, the stock market was heading down. Then we had a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals, which affected our economy. We passed laws that say to people, "We will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of this country." And then the enemy hit us. And that attack cost us a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th. We've been through a lot. You think about that.

But our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in the great State of Minnesota is 4.8 percent. Farm income is high. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. America is on the move, and we're not going to go back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Listen, I recognize that a hopeful society must have a growing economy, and I have a strategy to keep this economy moving forward. In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure people can find work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on our businesses. That means we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are hurting small-business owners in America.

If we want to keep jobs here in America, this country—Congress has got to pass my energy plan. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that uses technologies to make sure we can explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It's a plan that promotes clean coal technology. It is a plan that recognizes to keep jobs here, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to open up markets for our products. Listen, we've opened up America's markets for products from overseas, and that's good for you. If you have more choices,

you're likely to get the product you want at higher quality and better price. That's how the market works. So rather than shutting down our market and hurting consumers, my strategy is to tell places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I'm confident in doing so, because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To create jobs in America, we must be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. You heard that rhetoric, "Oh, all he's going to do is tax the rich." In order to make sure he can—in order to make sure he fulfills a little bit of his promises, he said he's going to tax the rich. We've heard that kind of language before. Yes, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—to stick you with the bill. We're not going to let the Senator tax you; we're going to whip him in November.

We've got to do something about this health care system. Costs are rising rapidly. We need to make sure health care is available and affordable. Most of the people who are uninsured work for small businesses. I think we ought to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same price and the same discounts big businesses get to buy insurance. We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts to help our small businesses and our workers.

We need to make sure that each poor community in—county in America has got a community health center for our poor and the indigent. We've got to make sure our children's—low-income children's health program is fully subscribed. We've got to use technology to wring excess costs out of the system. This is a practical, commonsense way to make sure health care is available and affordable.

And another thing we need to do is we've got to get rid of those frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running up the cost of health care. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the patients and the docs. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to reform health care, my administration will make sure the decisionmaking is between the doctor and the patient, not by officials in the Nation's Capital.

You know, in changing times—and we do have changing times—it helps bring stability into your life if you own something. More and more people are owning their own home. We've got plans over the next 4 years to continue to expand homeownership all around America. I love the idea of somebody opening up the front door where they live and saying, "Welcome to my home. Come to my house. Welcome to my piece of property."

In changing times, we've got to do something about our retirement system. You might remember the campaign in 2000, when they said, "If George W. wins, you're not going to get your Social Security check." Remember those ads? Yes. Our seniors got their checks. You're hearing the same rhetoric this time. Baby boomers like me, we'll get the checks.

We need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. We need to do something to make that system available for our children and grandchildren. That's why I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account that will earn better interest, a personal savings account they can call their own, that Government cannot take away.

We have a difference in philosophy in this campaign. My opponent's programs expand the Federal reach—the reach of the Federal Government. My programs expand freedom and opportunity for every American. He trusts Government. I trust the people.

In a world of change, there's some things that will not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations

of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're strengthening the intelligence services. We're transforming the All-Volunteer Army, which will stay an all-volunteer army. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will continue to work to spread liberty in the greater Middle East and around the world. And we'll prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world the way it was prior to September the 11th. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing weapons. Iraq was a gathering threat, and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and they're having Presidential elections today; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons program; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and three-quarters of Al Qaida—three-quarters of key members and associates of Al Qaida have been brought to justice. America has led. Many have followed. And the world is safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came in Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he had harbored terrorists. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. We knew that the biggest threat we face is if a terrorist group were able to attain weapons of mass destruction. And we knew that after September the 11th, it's vital that we think differently about our security. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

Saddam Hussein was a threat. I went to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein, and they concluded Saddam was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent was one of those who authorized the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try every option—every option—to solve a problem. I understand the consequences of sending people into combat. I know exactly what takes place. And so I went to the United Nations, hoping to solve this problem diplomatically. You know, they looked at the intelligence. They debated the issue, and they voted 15 to nothing, in the U.N. Security Council and said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what they told him. I believe when international bodies speak, it must mean what it says. In order to make the peace, when you say something, you'd better mean it.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, the report that came out the other day showed he didn't have the weapons we thought he had but, nevertheless, was gaming the system. He was using the Oil for Food Programme to weaken the sanctions. And you know why? Because he wanted to start his weapons programs up again. Saddam was a danger. He was a threat. We gave him a final chance. He ignored the demands of the free world. He deceived the inspectors. So I have a choice to make at this point: Do I trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. The world is seeing what's happening in Afghanistan. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq is moving toward free elections in January. Iraq has a strong Prime Minister and a National Council. We're standing with the people in those countries because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

And in standing with those people, we're making our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free societies in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that makes us safer.

Our missions in Afghanistan and Iraq are clear. We will help the Afghan people and the Iraqi people by training them, so they can fight for their own freedom, so they can fight for the destiny of their people. We'll help them get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are with us here today. I made a commitment to our families and to our troops: They will have the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion of vital funding to support our troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq. We got great support there in the Congress, strong bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people of this fact: Only four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize force and then voted against funding the troops—only four, two of whom are my opponent and his running mate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him why. And he said, "Well"—in the most famous quote of the 2004 election, one that has befuddled millions of Americans, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." They kept pressing him, and he's given, I don't know, six or seven answers. But one of the most interesting ones of all was he finally through up his hands and said, "It's just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

On national security, my opponent has a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. Right after the bombing in 1993, he voted to cut America's intelligence budget by $7.5 billion. And now he says he wants a "global test"——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——before we take action to defend our security. Think about that. The problem is that the Senator can never pass his own test. [*Laughter*] In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries around the world joined that coalition. Yet in the United States Senate, after the Security Council resolution, Senator John Kerry voted "no" for the use of force. See, I have a different view. We'll do everything we can to solve problems before we commit our troops, and I'll continue to work with our friends and allies. But I will never allow other nations to veto America's national security decisions.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I like to share with people some of my talks with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. I saw him in New York. I said, "You know, I'm going around America telling people that you and I talk. Do you mind if I share some of our conversation?" He said, "No." I didn't tell him I was going to tell you that Elvis is his favorite singer—[*laughter*]—was his favorite singer—is his favorite singer on CD. [*Laughter*]

The reason I bring him up is because it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting Japan. My dad fought there. I'm sure your dads and granddads, probably somebody here was there himself. See, they were the enemy, the sworn enemy. After we won World War II, though, Harry Truman believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. That's what he believed. A lot of people in this country doubted that, and you can understand why. There was a lot of bitterness toward the Japanese. A lot of people resented the fact that they

were the enemy. But Harry Truman and other Americans stayed with that concept.

And today, because they believed in the power of liberty, Japan is a democracy, and I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the big issues of the day and talking about how to keep the peace we all want. Think about that. Someday, if we're resolved and steadfast and strong, Iraq will become a democracy. And someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace we all want. And our children and our grandchildren will grow up in a better world for it.

I believe millions plead in silence for liberty in the Middle East. I believe women in the Middle East want to grow up in a free society. I know they want to raise their children, their sons and daughters, so they can realize their dreams. I believe if given a chance, people in that part of the world will embrace the most honorable form of Government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember seeing a man who had been in the rubble, looking for his buddy. He grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up trying to do my best to protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. at Center City Park. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in Hobbs, New Mexico

October 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming out. It's nice to be back in a part of the world that I know very well. I was raised right around the corner. It's good to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. It's good to be in a part of the world where people believe in their family and their faith and their country.

I want to thank all the people from Lea County, New Mexico, for coming here today. I'm proud you're here. Thanks for organizing this great event. I want to thank the people from Eddy County who are here. When I was a little guy, I distinctly remember going to Carlsbad Caverns. I went with the Cub Scout troop. It just so happened the den mother was my mother. [*Laughter*] I think that's when her hair started to go white. [*Laughter*] Appreciate the people from Chaves being here as well.

I want to thank my friends who've come over from the great State of Texas. I'm proud you all are here. I really appreciate the Flying Eagles from Hobbs being here. Thank you for being here in the band. Still play pretty good basketball? [*Applause*] Yes. That's what I figured. [*Laughter*]

I'm here to ask for your vote. That's what I'm here to do. By the way, I don't know if you know this, but I'm the first sitting President to have ever visited Hobbs, New Mexico. I may just be the first sitting President to have visited, and the first person

who's the President who's ever been here before he was President. [*Laughter*] All I can tell you is the other ones missed a lot by not coming to Hobbs, New Mexico.

I'm also here to ask for your help. You know, last time, in New Mexico, we lost by just a little over 600 votes. If every one of you all takes somebody to the polls come voting time, we'll win. So I'm here to thank you for what you're going to do. You're going to convince our fellow citizens to do their duty and vote. And when you're turning people out to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller who understands that if you want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I'm keeping really good company today. I'm proud to be traveling with one of our twin daughters, Jenna Bush. This is the camping trip I promised to take her on when she was a kid. [*Laughter*] Jenna and I just said goodbye to a great First Lady. You know, when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." I said, "You got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that. The American people have seen not only a great speaker, when she speaks, but they've seen a graceful, compassionate, great First Lady. I like to tell people, you know, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm real proud of George P. Bush. Now, his dad is my brother, and he's the Governor of Florida. So if he's listening, turn out that vote. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my Vice President. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. He's a good, solid, strong American.

I really am pleased to be working with a great United States Congressman from this part of the world. I'm proud of the job that Steve Pearce is doing. He brings that eastern New Mexico commonsense to Washington, DC. He's down-to-earth. He's smart. He's capable. He's doing you a great job in the House of Representatives. Laura and I are fond of Cynthia, his wife, and he kindly introduced me to his mother, Jane, today. I said to her, I said, "Is Steve still listening to you?" She said, "About half the time." [*Laughter*] I said, "Well, that sounds like me and my mother." [*Laughter*]

With us today as well is a fellow running for Congress across the State line, named Randy Neugebauer. I know Randy. I trust his judgment. He's a good, honest man. He's a man that I can work with. It is important that the people of west Texas send Randy Neugebauer back to the United States Congress.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I want to thank the members of my team who are here of Hispanic origin. The head of the SBA is here today, Hector Barreto; Rosario Marin, who's a former U.S. Treasurer; the White House Counsel, Alberto Gonzales, is with us today. These folks are here to help us inspire the Hispanic vote to come our way. *Con su apoyo, vamos a ganar.*

See, my message is for everybody. When I say a hopeful America, I'm just not talking about one segment of the country, I'm talking about every single person when it comes to a hopeful America.

I want to thank my friend Mark Wills. He's a good singer. Nice of him to be here today. I'm proud he's here.

I particularly want to thank all the grassroots activists, the people involved with turning out the vote and making the phone calls. I know you've done a lot of hard work. First of all, it takes a lot of hard work to get this many people to show up. [*Laughter*] If you put the same amount of work you put into getting this rally going to getting people to the polls, there's no doubt in my mind we'll carry New Mexico and win a great victory in November.

We had a great debate on Friday night. As you can tell, I'm kind of working my way west for the final debate. Our debates have highlighted the clear differences between the Senator and me on issues ranging from jobs to taxes to health care and to the war on terror. Much as he tries to obscure it, on issue after issue he has shown why he earned the ranking as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. Several of his statements the other night simply don't pass the credibility test.

With a straight face, he said he'd had only one position on Iraq. [*Laughter*] He must think we're on another planet. [*Laughter*] In the spring of 2003, as I ordered the invasion of Iraq, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It's the wrong war." In the same debate, he said Saddam was a threat. Then a few minutes later, he said there wasn't a threat in Iraq. And now he tries to tell us he's had only one position. Who's he trying to kid? [*Laughter*] He can run, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." [*Laughter*] The facts are that 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Then he was asked to look into the camera—[*laughter*]—and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he'd have to break almost all his other promises. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets would raise about $600 billion according to our counters, about $800 billion according to his planners—counters. The problem is, is that his spending plans will cost almost four times as much, $2.2 trillion. You can't have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he's going to have to raise your taxes. See, he can run, but he cannot hide.

You know, listening—after listening to that litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [*Laughter*] I have a different view, a different philosophy, and a strong record to be running on. I've worked hard to make this country a more hopeful place and a more secure place. I've led our country with principle and resolve, and that's how I'll continue to lead this Nation.

The world in which we live and work is changing. Workers switch jobs more than they used to. Women are working in the home and outside the home as well. That means they need new skills and benefits they can take with them from job to job. Yet many of the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, the health care, pension plans, and worker training, were created for a world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to transform these systems to help citizens realize their dreams.

And a plan—any plan, any strategy for a hopeful America begins with a growing economy that creates good jobs. See, I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers and our small-business owners and our farmers and our ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, you might remind people of what we've been through, what this economy has been through. The stock market started to go down 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. See, and that was—that foretold the recession that came. So we had the stock market correction and a recession. We had some corporate scandals which affected our economy. By the way, we passed tough laws. We have made it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the enemy hit us. And that cost our economy one million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

No, we've been through a lot, but we acted. Because we passed tax relief, this economy is growing. It's getting stronger, and we're not going to go back to the old days of tax and spend. The past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. State unemployment rate in New Mexico is 5.4 percent. People are working. People are finding a way to make a living. Our farmers are doing well. Our ranchers are doing well. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high.

We're moving forward, and there's more to do. To make sure quality jobs are here, created here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on the job creators. That means we got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are making it hard to expand the job base.

Listen, to make sure this economy continues to grow, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. I put a plan up there that encourages conservation, that understands we can use renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that also recognizes that we can explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It's a plan that recognizes we can use clean coal technology. At the heart of my plan is the understanding that in order to create jobs here, America must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. And people around here know what I'm talking about.

To create jobs, we need to keep people and businesses safe from wildfires. That's why I worked with Congress to pass the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. It's an important piece of legislation for much of your State. This good law allows us to thin out the underbrush that damages our forests and serves as kindling for fires. It's a commonsense measure that's protected communities all across the West. I was proud to work on it, and I was proud to sign it into law. Both the Republican Senator from this State—and by the way, Pete Domenici is a good one. He's a fine man. Both the Republican Senator and the Democrat Senator from New Mexico supported the Healthy Forests bill. But my opponent was against it. Now he says he likes parts of the law. I guess it's not only the wildfires that shift in the wind. [*Laughter*]

To create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets. Listen, we've opened up the markets for products from overseas, and it's good for you as consumers. See, here's the way the market works. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how it works. So what I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You open up your markets." And I'm saying that because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To create jobs here and to make sure this economy grows, we got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. We talked about them in the last debate, and I hope we talk about them in the next debate. See, he's saying, "Oh, don't worry, I can pay for all my programs by taxing the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we?

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, you know how it works. First of all, as I told you, he doesn't have enough money to pay for all his programs. There's a tax gap, and guess who usually gets stuck filling the hole? Yes, you do. Something else about taxing the rich, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to dodge the tax bill and stick you with it. We're not going to let him do it to you; we're going to win in November.

To build a more hopeful America, we've got to have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. It all starts with education. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, to challenge those systems that would just shuffle the kids through, year after year, grade after grade, without teaching them the basics. See, we have a optimistic outlook. I learned it being out here where the sky is big. I believe every child can learn. I believe that. That's why we've raised the standards. That's why we believe in local control of schools. And that's why we measure, so we can solve problems early, before it is too late.

The achievement gap in America is closing. We're not going back to those old days of mediocrity in our schools. *No dejaremos a ningun nino atras*—we will leave no child behind.

Listen, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college education, yet only one in four of our students gets there. That's why we've got to fund early intervention programs for at-risk students in high schools. That's why we've got to emphasize math and science. That's why, over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college degree.

I'm a big supporter of the community college system here in America. See, I believe that community colleges can be used wisely

to make sure our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

And to make sure our country is more hopeful, we need to make health care more affordable and more available. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center, places where the poor and the indigent can get the health care they need. I believe we've got to expand those community health centers. Since I've been President, we've opened more than 600—expanded or opened more than 600. There's more to do. We got more to do to make sure our poor children are fully subscribed in programs for low-income families so they get the health care they need.

There's more we can do to make sure health care is affordable. Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. In order to make sure families can get the insurance they need, we ought to allow small businesses to pool together, to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discount that big companies can buy insurance. We'll make sure health savings accounts are available to all, so workers in small businesses are able to pay lower premiums and people can save tax-free in a health care account they call their own.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the costs of your health care. You can't be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [*Laughter*] I think you have to choose. And my opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now. No, there's a big difference in health care. We'll talk about it Wednesday night. But in all we do to improve health care, we will make sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on. And I felt we had a problem when it came to making sure our seniors got good, modern medicine. Medicare is a vital program, yet it wasn't keeping pace with the changes in medicine. Let me give you an example. We'd pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. So I worked with Republicans and Democrats to strengthen Medicare. In 2006, our seniors will be able to get prescription drugs in the Medicare program. Medicare is changing for the better. Our seniors will get a modern health care program, and we're not going to go back to the old days.

Let me talk about the retirement systems for a second. In the 2000 campaign, I remember distinctly our seniors being told on television ads that, "If George W gets elected, you won't get your check." I don't know if they ran those kinds of ads here in New Mexico or not. I bet they did—yes. Well, the seniors got their checks. See, and that's the same kind of rhetoric you're going to hear again, because I'm going to talk about strengthening Social Security. But when I do so, I want you to remember that if you're getting your Social Security check, nothing is going to change. No matter what the political rhetoric is, you're going to continue to get your check, just like we said you would. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But when it—but for our younger folks here in America, for our children and grandchildren, we need to think differently about whether or not the Social Security system is going to be viable for them. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account so they can get a better rate of interest on the money being accumulated for their retirement.

In times of change, there are some things that don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations

of our society. And we stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. We've got a strategy that's clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. I will make sure the All-Volunteer Army remains the All-Volunteer Army. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorists; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorists' fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. That's the way the world was.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan held Presidential elections last weekend and is an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

After September the 11th, America had to assess every potential threat in a new light. It's one of the lessons of that fateful day. We confront an even greater danger, that the prospect of terrorists getting weapons of mass destruction would inflict great harm on America. We had to take a hard look at every place where terrorists might get those weapons.

And one regime stood out, the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We knew his record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he hated America. We knew he had used weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. In Saddam, we saw a threat.

And I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. And they came to the same conclusion I came to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they voted to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence, and he voted to authorize the use of force.

Before the United States ever commits troops into harm's way, we must try all means to deal with the threat. No President ever wants to send America's sons and daughters to war. So I worked to avoid that. And I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would work. The United Nations had a debate. They looked at the same intelligence we were looking at. They passed another resolution telling Saddam Hussein to "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe that when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

So we gave Saddam Hussein a final chance, and he continued to deceive the world. He was deceiving the weapons inspectors. And so I have a choice to make at this time in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Now, we didn't find the stockpiles that we all thought were there. But as the Duelfer report said, Saddam Hussein retained the intent and the capability to rebuild his weapons programs. He was gaming the Oil for Food Programme, using it to influence officials in other countries. Why? Because he wanted the world to look the other way, so he could restart his programs. The world is safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision.

Because we acted in Afghanistan and Iraq, America is safer and 50 million people now live in freedom. Think about what took place in Afghanistan this past weekend. It's an unbelievable story. Just 3½ years ago, people lived under the brutal dictatorship of the Taliban. These were people that wouldn't let many young girls go to school, and when women didn't agree with them, they took them in the public square and whipped them and sometimes killed them in the sports stadium. These were brutal people. And because they're gone, Afghanistan held Presidential elections. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman who was able to express her opinion in the polls.

And Iraq has got a strong Prime Minister and a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. Think about how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. No, we're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also standing with them because a free Afghanistan and Iraq will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace.

Our mission is clear. We will help those countries train armies so that the people of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending democracy. We'll help them get on the path to stability and self-govern as soon as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. And I want to thank the military families who are here today. I've made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and to their families: They'll have all the resources they need to do their job.

That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion in supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq. And this was essential funding. This was really important funding. We received great bipartisan support for that funding. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against it. Now, when you're out there rounding up the vote, remind people there were only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against money necessary to support our troops in harm's way, and two of those are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember my opponent's famous quote, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Now, I know something about eastern New Mexico and west Texas, and there are not many folks who talk like that in this part of the world. [*Laughter*] They kept pressing him, you know. He's given a lot of explanations for that vote. There are just too many to enumerate. [*Laughter*] One of my favorites is when he said, "Well, it's just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Now, on national security, my opponent has a record. He can run, but he can't hide from it. [*Laughter*] He voted against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America's intelligence budget by $7.5 billion after 1993. That's after the World Trade Center got bombed for the first time. He now says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's what he said. I'm not putting words in his mouth, either. [*Laughter*] The problem is the Senator can never pass his own test. [*Laughter*] Think about that. In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition. Yet in the United States Senate after the Security Council resolution, Senator Kerry voted "no" on the authorization of force.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, if driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait with the support of the international community does not meet this test, then nothing will meet his test, and that's dangerous in the kind of world we live in. See, we have a different view of the world, a different view of America's role in confronting threats. Just this weekend, we saw new evidence that Senator Kerry fundamentally misunderstands the war on terror. Earlier he questioned whether it was really a war at all, describing it as primarily a law enforcement and intelligence-gathering operation instead of a threat that demands the full use of American power.

Now, just this weekend, Senator Kerry talked of reducing terrorism to, quote, "nuisance," end quote, and compared it to prostitution and illegal gambling. See, I couldn't disagree more. Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying terrorists, and spreading freedom and liberty around the world.

I'll always work with our friends and allies. Alliances are important, and over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I tell people about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I tell them that because it's an interesting lesson. You see, it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting the Japanese. If you're 58 years old, it seems like an eternity, since it was 60 years ago. [*Laughter*] But my dad was in the war. I guarantee you there are people here in the audience who were touched by that war and had a granddad or a dad fight in that war.

And after we won, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the power of liberty to transform societies, and he worked with the Japanese to help them develop a democracy. A lot of people questioned that. You know, there was a lot of pessimism after World War II. You can understand why. The Japanese were the enemy. Why do we care after we won? We had defeated them. A lot of people here's lives had been turned upside-down because a loved-one's life had been lost, and they didn't have—want to have anything to do with the enemy. But fortunately, there were people in this country who had the faith in the ability of liberty to transform societies.

And so now I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace, talking about how to achieve the peace we want for our children and grandchildren. I believe the same lessons apply for today. We will achieve a free Iraq. Iraq will be a democracy. And when we do so, at some point in time, an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq will be sitting down talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be able to live in a better world.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women want there to be a free society in the Middle East. I know they want their children to be able to grow up in a world in which they can realize their dreams. I believe that if given a chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that is indelibly etched in my memory. I will never forget it. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a man grabbing me by the arm, and looked me in the eyes, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I have awakened, working as hard as I possibly can to protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:13 a.m. at the Lea County Event Center. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Cynthia Pearce, wife of Representative Steve Pearce; Randy Neugebauer, candidate for Congress in Texas' Nineteenth Congressional District; country music entertainer Mark Wills; Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Senatorial Candidate Pete Coors in Denver, Colorado

October 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you coming. Nice to be back in Colorado. I've spent some quality time here in the past. I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here also asking—I'm here to say as clearly as I can say it, the right man for the United States Senate from the State of Colorado is Pete Coors.

And I want to thank you all for being here to help him. I like his judgment. I like his experience. I like his values. I like the fact that he is—will bring some commonsense to the Halls of the United States Senate. Oh, I might not get him to vote every way—every time the way I want him to—[*laughter*]—he's kind of an independent fellow. [*Laughter*] But I know I'll be able to count on him on the big issues.

Laura sends her best. We spent the evening in Crawford, which is a long way away from Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] And she is—she's resting up today, and she's going to take to the road tomorrow. She is a fabulous First Lady. I love her dearly. You know, when I met her she was a public school librarian. And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you"—after I asked her, of course—and she said, "just so long as I never have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "You got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She's speaking a lot, and the American people know her as a compassionate, warm, great First Lady.

And I'm proud of my runningmate, proud of Dick Cheney. I like to tell people, when he was debating John Edwards it was clear he didn't have the waviest hair on the platform. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, excellent experience, and he's doing a really good job as our Vice President.

And I appreciate Marilyn Coors for putting up with the race for the Senate. It's not easy when you're out there campaigning every day, but it's worthwhile, believe me. Public service, done the right way, is necessary for a good country. So thanks for doing what you're doing. It's good to see your mom, Pete. You and I share a strong-willed mother. [*Laughter*]

Pete's going to take the place of a good man in Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I like him. He's a good fellow, a good, solid citizen. And he'll serve side by side with another good man in Wayne Allard.

I appreciate your Governor. Bill Owens is doing a fine job. And Frances is one of our alltime favorites. Great to see you, Frances. Thank you for being here. I appreciate the fact that Congressman Joel Hefley is here, along with his wife, Lynn. Thanks for coming. That would be State Representative Lynn Hefley. Just don't challenge him in the primary sometime. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, that's right.

Tom Tancredo and Jackie are with us. Thanks, Tom and Jackie. Thanks for coming. Beauprez is here somewhere. Oh, there he is, yes—and Claudia. Thank you all for coming. It's good to see you all. I appreciate you're here. Finally got out of town, didn't you? [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the State leaders who are here. I want to thank Bruce Benson, the campaign chairman for Pete. I wish Greg Walcher all the best in his race for the Third District of Colorado. Where is he? There he is, good.

Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm going to give a speech a little later on this evening, so I don't want to get too repetitive. But it's really time to start ginning up these voter turnout organizations. It's time to make sure that people understand we have an obligation in our society to vote. And I want to thank you all for helping to turn out that vote. It matters whether or not people show up to the polls. I mean, it—and I'm confident in this State. We'll carry Colorado again.

I'm heading toward our final debate. I enjoy the debates. It's an interesting experience. [*Laughter*] It gives a chance to share ideas and talk about the big differences. And there are big differences. He's a fellow that I think had some credibility problems in the debates. He said with a straight face that he'd only had one position on Iraq. [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We noticed. [*Laughter*]

The President. You might remember, in the spring of 2003 as I ordered troops into harm's way, he said, "It was the right decision." Then when the political heat gets on, he says, "It was the wrong war." He can run from his positions, but he cannot hide.

He said with another straight face that when it comes to health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." Unbelievable statement. The facts are that 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program. He can run from his position, but he cannot hide.

And then he said—and then they asked him to look in the camera, and he promised not to raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000. The problem is, to keep that promise he'd have to break almost all his other ones. [*Laughter*] I'm looking forward to talking about taxes in this campaign. He's going to raise your taxes, pure and simple. Raising your taxes would be bad policy for our economy, bad policy as this economy is beginning to grow. He can run, but he cannot hide.

That's why these debates are important. You know, after listening to all his complaints and his dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [*Laughter*] Yes. No, I'm looking forward to it. We have a different philosophy, different way of looking at things. And one reason I'm hopeful that Pete wins—and I believe he will—is that we've got to put policies in place that keep the economy growing.

You know, when you're out there gathering up the vote, remind people of what we've been through. This economy has been through a lot. Six months prior to our arrival, the stock market was in serious decline. And then we had a recession, and then we had corporate scandals, and then we got attacked. And that attack on America cost us one million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

We faced some serious obstacles, but because we acted, because we cut the taxes on the people, the recession was one of the shortest in American history. And our economy is growing, and it's getting stronger. And the fundamental question is, how do we keep it growing. It really is the issue, isn't it?

I think the best way to keep the economy growing is to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations. That means less lawsuits. That means an energy plan that encourages conservation, spends money on renewables and uses technology, but it's an energy plan as well that recognizes we can explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It's a plan that says in order to keep jobs here, we've got to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I think trade is an issue in this campaign. I tell the American people we've opened up our markets to foreign products, which is good for the consumers. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. So rather than shutting down our market and falling prey to economic isolationism, which I believe will hurt jobs, I've got a different strategy, which is to go to places like China and say, "You treat us the way we treat

you. You open up your markets." And we're doing that all around the world.

I believe Pete understands all this. I know he knows how to—that the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes. And the best way to do that is keep taxes low, regulations down, and do something about these trial lawyers that are running all over the business—[*applause*]. I don't think you can be pro-entrepreneur, pro-doctor, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [*Laughter*] I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for legal reforms.

A more hopeful society is one in which we educate our people. It starts with making sure the youngsters can read, write, and add and subtract. I look forward to defending the No Child Left Behind Act. At the heart of the No Child Left Behind Act is my fervent belief that every child can learn in America. Think about a system where the expectations are so low that all they do is shuffle kids through, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. That's not good enough for this country.

See, when you hear me say we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, what I'm saying is, is that the heart of my education reforms is the belief that everybody can learn, and we should expect everybody to learn. It's easy to quit on certain kids in American schools. You go into inner-city America, and it's easy to take a classroom full of the "hard-to-educate" and just move them through, or somebody's parent doesn't speak English as a first language. That's not the America I know. The America I know believes every child can learn.

And that's why we now have got, in return for increased Federal spending, a system that says, "Why don't you measure early to determine whether or not a child can read, and if not, we'll correct the problems before it's too late." And we're closing an achievement gap in America, and I need Pete Coors up there to make sure we don't go back to the old days of mediocrity.

No, there's a lot more we can do. On health care—we'll have intermediate programs for at-risk kids in high schools and emphasize math and science, keep raising the bar, expand Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, to make sure more of our kids are able to start their careers with a college diploma. I'm a big believer in community colleges, to be able to use the community college system to be able to train workers for the jobs which actually exist. I mean, if we want to be competitive in the 21st century, we've got to be right about education. And this administration has got us headed in the right direction, and we're not going to go backwards.

Health care is an issue. Health care is a big issue in the country. I like to tell people I went up there to solve problems and not just shuffle them on to other Presidents. And so I took on the Medicare issue. It was called "Mediscare" for a long period of time. You talked about it, and you got whipped at the polls. But that's not my style. My style is to take on issues head on. And Medicare wasn't meeting the obligations to our seniors. It just wasn't. Medicine was being modernized, and Medicare was stuck.

Let me give you an example—and I'll continue to cite these kind of examples in our forums. We would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery in Medicare but not a single dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That did not make any sense for our seniors. It certainly didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. So we worked with Congress, and we've now strengthened and modernized Medicare. Seniors will get prescription drug coverage in the year 2006, and the health care for our seniors will vastly improve.

But inherent in the new Medicare reform is my basic belief that our seniors as well as all people in America ought to have more choices when it comes to health care. One of the key reforms was to make sure that seniors were able to choose different plans to be able to meet their needs. And that's the fundamental difference between me and my opponent. I told you, he said the other day with a straight face the Government doesn't have anything to do with his health care. That's wrong. He's going to expand Medicaid. That's a Government program. My fundamental—my health care plan addresses

the fundamentals, which is availability and affordability.

Now, look, we need to take care of the poor in America, and that's why I'm for expansion of community health centers so the poor and the indigent can get good preventative care, good primary care in places other than emergency rooms in the hospitals. And I believe we ought to make sure our children—low-income children's health care programs are fully subscribed to. These are commonsense ways to take care of people who cannot help themselves.

But when it comes to overall health care, it's a vital mistake to increase the role of the Federal Government. That's why I'm for association health plans, to allow small businesses to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big businesses can. I'm for expanding health savings accounts, which enable workers and small businesses to pay low premium—buy low-premium catastrophic plans and, at the same time, set aside money on a tax-free basis. Many of the young in America are uninsured because they can't find insurance that fits their needs. A health savings account will allow a young worker to be able to design his or her own health care program that he or she can save money tax-free and take from job to job.

And finally, in order to make sure that health care works, we've got to do something about the lawsuits. I'm telling you, these lawsuits are driving good docs out of business and driving up the cost of health care. It's a big issue. It is a big issue, and it's one that resonates. And my opponent got up there and said he's for it. My only question is, why didn't you vote for it when it was on the floor of the United States Senate? He's trying to run, but we're not going to let him hide. [*Laughter*]

I think values are an important part of this campaign—values for the Presidency as well as values for the Senate race. You know, in changing times—and they do change—it's important to have people understand certain things don't change, like the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. I believe we ought to stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We need to stand up for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I need Pete in the United States Senate to make sure that my judges are confirmed, judges who will make decisions not based upon personal opinion but the strict interpretation of the law.

And the other issue, of course, is how to make the world a safer place, what to do to protect this country. Our most solemn duty is to protect the American people. I'll tell people tonight like I've been telling them all over the country, if we show uncertainty or weakness in this decade, this world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch. We will——

Audience member. We're with you, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you. We will continue to work to protect this homeland. You know, we've got to be right 100 percent of the time. The enemy has got to be right once, and that's a challenge we face. So Pete will be working on smart ways to make sure the intelligence system works better and make sure the information flows between our different law enforcement agencies is not disrupted. That's why I believe we need to renew the PATRIOT Act. We'll make sure the ports and borders are protected as well as they can be. But the best way to defeat the terrorists is to stay on the offense. We got to beat them overseas so we don't have to face them here at home.

We have a fundamental difference in this campaign. My opponent says it's all about law enforcement and intelligence. This war on terror requires all of the might of the United States of America in order to protect the American people. Let me tell you some of the things I've learned since I've been your President. One, you cannot negotiate with these people, these ideologues of hate. You cannot hope for the best, you know, "Well, maybe if we only say some nice things, they'll change their mind." That's not how they think. The only way to deal with them is to find them and bring them to justice before they hurt us again.

And we're making progress. We're making progress because three-quarters of Al Qaida's—and their associates have been brought to justice. And as we speak, we're

on the hunt, and we'll keep the pressure on them, unrelenting pressure to protect you.

Secondly, this is a new kind of war. It's different from what we're used to. And when we find somebody who harbors these people, they must be held to account as well. Now, let me tell you something about the Presidency. When you say something, you better mean what you say. And when I told the Taliban that they need to get rid of Al Qaida, I meant what I said. And when they didn't, we sent troops in and liberated the people of Afghanistan. In liberating the people of Afghanistan, we made ourselves safer. Remember, Al Qaida was training in Afghanistan. It was like they were the parasite, and the Taliban was a weak host. And the strategy of these ideologues of hate is to eventually take over the host. They had just about done it. And so we're safer.

We've also done something different as well—we've accomplished something else as well, and that is, in protecting our own security, we've helped establish a democracy. One of the most remarkable things happened this past weekend. Think about what life was like for people under the Taliban. Young girls couldn't go to school. Their mothers were whipped in the public square if they didn't toe the line on this barbaric vision of mankind. Some were executed in sports stadiums. And yesterday—or 2 days ago, people showed up to vote for the President of that country. And the first voter—the first voter was a 19-year-old girl. Isn't that fantastic?

It's in our interests that freedom spread. Freedom is powerful. If just given a chance, freedom is a powerful notion. Everybody wants to be free, I think. I believe freedom is God's gift to every man and woman in this world. At the heart of much of what I say to the American people is that belief.

And then we went into Iraq. The biggest threat facing America is that a terrorist network like Al Qaida could end up with weapons of mass destruction. If you think the carnage was bad with airplanes, imagine what it would be with a weapon of mass destruction. And I saw a threat. Well, the second lesson of September the 11th is that when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it comes to hurt us. Remember the old days of prior to September the 11th. If we saw a threat, we felt safe, because oceans seemed to protect us. That's all changed. It's essential your President understand that, and we just can't hope threats go away. We must deal with them.

And so I saw a threat in Saddam. Remember, I went to the Congress, and the Congress saw the same threat. My opponent saw the same intelligence I saw and voted to authorize the use of force, something he's not too clear about these days. [*Laughter*]

And I went to the United Nations because committing our troops into harm's way is the last option for the President. I fully understand the consequences of war. You know, I wish I never had to commit troops. I was hoping diplomacy would work. But as it had for over a decade, diplomacy failed. The United Nations passed resolution after resolution after resolution, and Saddam just ignored them. I think it is reflective of my opponent's point of view when he says, "Well, what we should have done was passed another resolution"—[*laughter*]—precisely what Saddam was hoping would happen. He was hoping the world would turn away.

Listen, we didn't find any weapons when we got in there. We all thought there would be weapons. But let me tell you what we did find. We found that he had the capability and the intent and the expertise to reconstitute his weapons programs and, as the Duelfer report pointed out, that he was gaming the Oil for Food Programme, trying to influence governments to get rid of the sanctions which were already weakening, for one reason: to reconstitute his weapons. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision, and the world is better off without Saddam.

And we're making progress. We're headed toward elections in January. Think about how far that society has come from the days of a brutal tyrant. I told the story about the seven men that came to see me in the Oval Office. I think I said it at the convention. These guys walk in, and they've all had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein and an X carved in their forehead. I'll tell you why. The currency had gone down. The Iraqi dinar had gone down, and he needed a scapegoat in order to, I guess, justify to other people who were watching that he wasn't at fault.

So he plucked these small-business merchants out of society.

I asked one of them, I said, "Why you?" He said, well, he was a jeweler, and he happened to sell gold—or sell dinars to buy euros to buy gold in order to use to make jewelry. It was just a bad day for him to have made that transition—transaction. So Saddam pulls him out, cuts off his hand, carves an X into his forehead, and charges him for the operation. This is Saddam Hussein. This is the kind of person that used to run that country.

Fortunately for them, citizens from around the world, including people in Houston, Texas, saw their plight, flew them to Houston, and they have a new hand put on, free. What a contrast between a society as brutal as that run by Saddam and a compassionate society like the United States of America.

The terrorists are fighting us in Iraq because they cannot stand the thought of a free society in their midst. The fight in Iraq is integral to the war on terror. It's an essential battle. And by being resolved and firm, we will succeed in Iraq. And when we do, the world will be better off.

A couple other points I want to make, and then we'll liberate you. [*Laughter*] First, anytime we put our troops into harm's way, they need to have the full support of the Government. And we got good support in September of 2003 for the $87 billion supplemental request. And I'm telling you, this money was vital. It provided important resources for troops in harm's way, not only in Iraq, in Afghanistan. Twelve Members of the Senate voted against it. Four Members of the Senate voted to authorize the use of force and not to fund the troops, two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate. I think that is illustrative. I think it's a statement about this race for the Presidency.

And so was his answer to the first time he got asked the question, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." It's an astounding answer. [*Laughter*] But it's been one of seven explanations—[*laughter*]—as to why. One of them was, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way. I will continue, as your Commander in Chief, to make sure our troops have the best.

I tell people about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi. I just did so in Hobbs, New Mexico, and I'm going to do so tonight here in Denver. I'm going to do so tomorrow in Colorado Springs, for a reason—because I want people to understand what liberty can do to societies. I tell people I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The best way to make the case is to explain that one of my friends, with whom I deal, is the Prime Minister of Japan, Koizumi. I saw him in New York, and I said, "Listen, I'm telling everybody in the country about you. Do you mind if I continue doing it?" He said, "Fine." Of course, what I didn't ask him, if I could tell you that his favorite singer was Elvis. [*Laughter*] The guy's a good guy. I like him a lot.

But it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting the Japanese. We were at war. They were the sworn enemy of America. My dad fought them. I'm sure your dads and granddads did as well. After we won, Harry S. Truman believed in the transformational power of liberty, that liberty can convert an enemy into an ally. He believed that. There was a lot of skeptics who said that couldn't happen. You can understand why. We had just fought them. Many lives had been changed as a result of the carnage of World War II. I'm sure a lot of moms and dads say, "Why even think about it. Why worry about it?"

But Harry Truman had that belief, as did a lot of other Americans. And so after the war was over, we worked with Japan to help them build a democracy. And today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the big issues confronting the world, talking about how to keep the peace we all want. Think about that. Sixty years or so after we had fought these people, I now sit down with the leader of their country talking about peace, talking about North Korea, talking about helping Iraq, talking about fighting terror, all aimed at keeping the peace.

Someday, an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq will be sitting down at the table talking about the peace in the greater Middle East, talking about how

to help women in the greater Middle East realize a free society, talking about how others have a chance to realize the great benefits of democracy.

That's what's happened. These are historic times. The world is changing for the better. I told the people in my convention speech, we've done the hard work and climbed the mountain; we see the valley below. It's a valley of peace, based upon freedom and liberty. And make no mistake about it—make no mistake about it—if this country has the right leadership and the right determination and the will to succeed, we will. And future generations of Americans will be better off for it.

Thanks for coming. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:24 p.m. at the Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Marilyn Coors, wife of senatorial candidate Pete Coors; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Jackie Tancredo, wife of Representative Tom Tancredo; Claudia Beauprez, wife of Representative Bob Beauprez; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in Morrison, Colorado

October 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. Go ahead and be seated. Thanks for coming. It's nice to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties.

Tommy and I were both raised in Midland, Texas. He went to Alamo Junior High, and I went to San Jacinto Junior High. So we're standing here, and he says to me, "This doesn't look like where we were raised." [*Laughter*] What a beautiful part of the world. Thanks for coming out to say hello.

I've come back to this beautiful part of our country to ask for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help as well. We're getting close to voting time here in America. And I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. I'm asking you to find people from all walks of life to vote. As you get people to go to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats. Like you, they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America. There is no doubt with your help, we'll carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I wish Laura was here. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just as long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. She's given a lot of speeches. The American people see a compassionate, warm, great First Lady in Laura Bush. She didn't make it, but Jenna did. I'm proud of our daughters, Barbara and Jenna.

I'm also proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He did a great job at his debate. You know, he didn't have the prettiest hair there at the debate. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment and his experience and his ability to get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be introduced by a great American, Tommy Franks. He'll go down in history as one of America's great generals. America is more secure and the world is better off because of the generalship of General Tommy Franks. And I'm proud his wife, Cathy, is with him too.

I want to thank my friend Mike Shanahan for being up on stage with me. I appreciate him taking the time. I said, "You got any suggestions?" He said, "Yes, stay on the offense." I appreciate Peggy coming. I want to thank all the Bronco players who are here today. Congratulations on a great victory this weekend.

I'm proud to call your Governor my friend, Bill Owens. He's doing a great job for Colorado. And I want to thank the fine first lady of Colorado, Frances, for being here as well.

Two Members of the United States Congress with us today, Bob Beauprez and Tom Tancredo. I appreciate their service. Thank you all for coming.

I'm proud to be with the next United States Senator from Colorado, Pete Coors.

Audience members. Pete! Pete! Pete!

The President. I want to thank my friend Gwyn Dieter. She's the Bush-Cheney W Stands for Women chairman.

Appreciate Collin Raye being here. I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Thank you for what you have done, and thank you for what you're going to do to turn out the vote.

I'm on my way to the third and final debate. We had a good debate last Friday. These debates have highlighted the clear differences between the Senator and me on issues ranging from jobs to taxes to health care to the war on terror. Much as he's strived to obscure it, on issue after issue my opponent has shown why he has earned his ranking as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Several statements he made the other night simply didn't pass the credibility test. With a straight face, he said he had had only one position on Iraq. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] He must think we've been on another planet. Spring of 2003, I ordered the invasion of Iraq. Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It's the wrong war." In the same debate, he said Saddam was a threat. Then a few minutes later, he said there wasn't a threat in Iraq. And he tells us he's only had one position. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." [*Laughter*] The facts are that 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run, but he cannot hide.

And then Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. His plan to raise taxes in the top two income brackets would raise about $600 billion. But his spending plans will cost almost 4 times as much, more than $2.2 trillion. You cannot have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he will have to raise your taxes. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

You know, after listening to his litany of complaints and his dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [*Laughter*]

I have a very different philosophy than him. I'm a compassionate conservative. I have worked to make America more hopeful and more secure. I've led our country with principle and resolve, and with your help, that is how I will lead our Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. My plan for a hopeful America begins with a growing economy that creates good jobs. I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of America's workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out convincing people to vote our way, remind them what we've been through. The stock market was in serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. Then we had a recession. We had some corporate scandals which affected our economy. We passed tough laws to make it abundantly clear: We will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we had the attacks of September the 11th, which cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months afterwards.

But we acted. We put tax relief in place. The recession was one of the shallowest in American history, and our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years.

The past 13 months, we've added more than 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate in America is at 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is at 5.1 percent. Farm income is up. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. More of our minority citizens own their homes than ever before. America is moving forward, and there's much more to do.

To make sure jobs are here in America, to make sure you can find good paying jobs, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we need to reduce the burden of regulations on our job creators. We've got to end the junk lawsuits that are threatening small businesses that create most of the new jobs in America.

To create jobs, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. My plan encourages conservation. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It will help modernize the electricity grid. It encourages clean coal technology. It recognizes we can explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs, we need to reject economic isolationism and open up markets around the world for U.S. products. See, I know, with a level playing field, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is fair. And that's why I tell China, "You treat us the way we treat you." The best way to create jobs is to be selling our goods overseas.

To create jobs, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. My opponent says oh, don't worry, he's going to pay for all his promises by taxing the rich. We've heard that before, haven't we?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to stick you with the bill. [*Laughter*] We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to win in November.

Speaking about the Tax Code, it's a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'll lead a bipartisan effort to simplify the Tax Code and make it more fair for the American people.

Listen, to build a more hopeful America, we must have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. This all starts with education. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I went to stop the practice of just simply shuffling the "hard-to-educate" through, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. We've raised the standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems before they're too late. We trust the local people to make the right decisions for their schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity.

Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there. So we'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools for at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

One of the cornerstones of my plan to make sure our workers get the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century is to support the community college system here in Colorado and around our country.

To build a more hopeful America, we need to make health care more affordable and available. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe in community health centers, places where the poor can get care. I believe every poor county in America should have a community health center. And we need to do more to make sure our poor children are fully subscribed in our program for low-income families so they can get the health care they need.

We must do more to make sure health care is affordable. Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses have trouble affording health care. To help more workers get health care, we should allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies get to do.

To make sure health care is affordable, we will expand health savings accounts. We will give small businesses tax credits to pay into health savings accounts for their employees. We want workers to own their own accounts so they can base their medical decisions on advice from a doctor, not somebody in an HMO.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about

these junk lawsuits that are running up the costs of health care and running good doctors out of practice. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care, this administration will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government officials in Washington, DC. I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. See, I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I saw a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't.

For example, we paid thousands of dollars for heart surgery under Medicare but wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. So we called people together, and we modernized Medicare. And starting in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage. We're not going to go back to the days of not honoring our seniors when it comes to good health.

Let me talk about our retirement systems. We need to do something about Social Security. In 2000, when I ran, I remember those ads saying, "If George W. gets to be the President, our seniors won't get their checks." You might remember those ads. Well, our seniors got their checks, and the seniors will continue to get their Social Security checks. Baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. And that's why I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to set aside some of their own tax money in personal accounts to get a better rate of return, personal accounts they call their own.

No, we're living in changing times, but some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives our citizens are at stake.

Audience members. We love you, W!

The President. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. I will make sure the All-Volunteer Army remains the All-Volunteer Army. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll continue to work to spread freedom and peace. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat, and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan held elections this weekend and is an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is

making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he hated America. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. Members of Congress looked at the very same intelligence I looked at and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion and voted "yes" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the United States ever commits troops into harm's way, we must try all means—all means—to deal with any threat. No President ever wants to have to send our sons and daughters into harm's way. And so that's why I went to the United Nations. I was hopeful that diplomacy would solve the threat. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence, debated the issue, and passed a resolution by a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council that said Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. Now, I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

Saddam Hussein deceived the inspectors. He wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. He was used to ignoring the demands. After all, he'd ignored resolution after resolution after resolution. We gave him his final chance. He chose to deceive and evade. And so I have a choice to make: Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Now, we did not find the stockpiles that we all thought were there. But the Duelfer report that came out last week said that Saddam Hussein retained the intent and the capability and the expertise to rebuild his weapons programs. It said he was gaming the system, using the Oil for Food Programme to try to influence officials in other nations to get rid of the sanctions. And why? Because he wanted the world to look the other way so he could restart his weapons programs. And that was a danger we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted in our self-interest, not only are we safer, but 50 million people now live in freedom. Think about what happened in Afghanistan. Think about what happened in that country that was once ruled by the Taliban. It wasn't all that long ago that many young girls were not even allowed to go to school, and their mothers were whipped in the public square, sometimes executed in a sports stadium because they wouldn't toe the line of these ideologues of hate. And just this weekend, people by the thousands voted for their President. The first—3½ years ago, nobody would have thought that was possible. The first person to vote in the Presidential elections in Afghanistan was a 19-year-old girl. Iraq is headed toward democracy. Iraq has a strong Prime Minister and a National Council, and elections will be held in January.

We're standing with the people in those countries because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're standing with them because a free Afghanistan and a free Iraq will make us all safer. You see, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. And that helps us keep the peace.

Our mission is clear. We will help these countries train armies so their own people can do the hard work of defending democracy. We will help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of a such a great military. I want to thank

the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here today for your sacrifice. And I assure you, we'll keep the commitment I've made to our troops. We'll make sure they have the resources they need to complete their missions.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress, September of 2003, and requested $87 billion to support our troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq. It was essential funding. It was vital for their missions. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Even more startling is this statistic: There were only four Members of the United States Senate who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of this campaign: When asked to explain his vote, my opponent said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Now, he's given a lot of explanations since then for that vote. One of my favorites is when he just threw up his hands and said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

On national security, my opponent has a record. He has a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America's intelligence budget by $7.5 billion after 1993. He now says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The problem is, the Senator can never pass his own test. In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition, yet in the United States Senate after the Security Council resolution, my opponent voted "no" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait with the support of the international community does not meet his test, nothing will. [*Laughter*] And in this dangerous world, that's the wrong position to take.

We have a very different view on how to protect America and our role in confronting threats in the world. Just this weekend, we saw new evidence that my opponent fundamentally misunderstands the war against terror. Earlier, he questioned whether it's really a war at all, describing it as primarily a law enforcement and intelligence-gathering operation instead of a threat that demands the full use of American power. Now just this weekend, Senator Kerry talked of reducing terrorism to a, quote, "nuisance"—[*laughter*]—and compared it to prostitution and illegal gambling.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying the terrorist networks, and spreading freedom and liberty around the world.

I will always work with our friends and allies. For the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on our strong coalition, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other nations.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. To make my point, I oftentimes talk about my friend Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him at the United Nations meetings in early September. I said, "You know, I'm talking about you on the campaign trail. Is that okay?" He said, "Fine, go ahead and talk about me." I didn't ask permission, though, as to whether or not I could tell you that his favorite singer was Elvis. [*Laughter*]

What's interesting about my relationship is that it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting Japan. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad

fought against the Japanese. Your dads and granddads, husbands, loved ones fought against the Japanese as well. After we defeated the Japanese in World War II, we had a President named Harry S. Truman who believed in the transformational power of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally. He worked with others to help Japan develop a democracy.

And there was a lot of skepticism in our country at that time, about whether we wanted Japan to become a democracy, about whether Japan could become a democracy. And you could understand why there was skepticism. We had just fought them, and many families' lives had been turned upside-down because of the death in the World War II.

But my predecessor and other citizens held to that belief that liberty could transform nations. And today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan talking about the peace, talking about how do we make the world a more peaceful place for generations to come. We will succeed in Iraq. Iraq will become a democracy. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women want to grow up in a free society and raise their children in a free society. And I believe that if given the chance, the people in the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and the deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a fellow coming out of the rubble, and I was trying to do my best to console them there at the site. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help—with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless, and thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. at Red Rocks Park & Amphitheater. In his remarks, he referred to Cathy Franks, wife of Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Mike Shanahan, head coach, Denver Broncos, National Football League, and his wife, Peggy; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Gwyneth Dieter, Colorado State chairperson, W Stands for Women, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; country music entertainer Collin Raye; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gen. Franks, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Death of Christopher Reeve

October 11, 2004

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Christopher Reeve. Mr. Reeve was an example of personal courage, optimism, and self-determination. He was brave in the face of adversity and was greatly admired by millions of Americans. He will be remembered

as an accomplished actor and for his dedicated advocacy for those with physical disabilities. We send our prayers and condolences to his family and friends.

Proclamation 7829—Columbus Day, 2004

October 11, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The journeys of Christopher Columbus are among the world's greatest stories of daring and discovery. His courage, optimism, and adventurous spirit altered the course of history. On Columbus Day, we celebrate this remarkable explorer and his contributions to the "New World."

In August 1492, Columbus left Spain and sailed into the unknown with the simplest of navigational equipment. The risks were great and the outcome uncertain. Yet, Columbus was committed to the cause of discovery, finding a more efficient trade route to the East and advancing European civilization.

Today, Columbus' voyages continue to stir our imagination and encourage us to explore new frontiers. His spirit of determination and discovery is a characteristic shared by the American people and is reflected throughout our history, from the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Moon landing and our many scientific and technological advances.

Columbus Day is also a celebration of the many contributions that Italian Americans have made to our Nation. Every aspect of our culture, whether it be art or music, law or politics, reflects the influence of Italian Americans. On this day we also remain thankful for the strong ties between the United States and Italy and pay tribute to the courageous and selfless Italian forces who are helping to advance freedom alongside American and coalition troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In commemoration of Columbus' journey, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934, and modified in 1968 (36 U.S.C. 107), as amended, has requested that the President proclaim the second Monday of October of each year as "Columbus Day."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 11, 2004, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:54 a.m., October 13, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 14.

Proclamation 7830—General Pulaski Memorial Day, 2004

October 11, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The story of Revolutionary War hero Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski is one of bravery and sacrifice that helped to secure America's blessings of liberty. We remember General Pulaski for his skill in battle, his commitment to freedom, and his willingness to give his life for America's independence.

Born in Poland in 1745, Casimir Pulaski first gained distinction as a military hero while fighting to defend his native Poland. His reputation as a bold warrior and his dedication to the cause of liberty became known throughout Europe.

Pulaski met with Benjamin Franklin in Paris in 1777 and agreed to join the Americans in their fight for freedom. He quickly proved to be a gifted military leader and was commissioned as a Brigadier General. He became known as "the Father of the American Cavalry," recruiting and training a special corps of American, Polish, Irish, French, and

German troops who fought with great skill and success. During the siege of Savannah in 1779, General Pulaski was mortally wounded, leaving a legacy of heroism that continues to inspire people around the world.

On General Pulaski Memorial Day, we honor a noble patriot committed to the cause of freedom, and we recognize the countless contributions Polish Americans have made to our Nation and our culture. We also celebrate the strong friendship between the United States and Poland, remembering our shared history and common values and honoring the sacrifices of Polish troops who have served bravely alongside American and coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 11, 2004, as General Pulaski Memorial Day. I encourage all Americans to commemorate this occasion with appropriate programs and activities paying tribute to Casimir Pulaski and honoring all those who defend freedom.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:54 a.m., October 13, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 14.

Remarks in Colorado Springs, Colorado

October 12, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be back in Colorado Springs. I've come back to ask for your vote. I've come back to ask for your help in getting people to the polls on November the 2d. We have a duty in this country to participate in the democratic system. Remind your friends and neighbors about that duty. Get people from all the neighborhoods in Colorado Springs to show up to vote. Get them to do what all of us must do, to vote on election day. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them if they want a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

It's an amazing line of work, isn't it, where you get your daughter to introduce you in front of thousands of people. I'm really proud of Jenna and Barbara. Laura and I love them dearly. I want to thank them for their help on the campaign trail. And it warms my heart and strengthens my spirit to be campaigning with somebody I love a lot.

I wish Laura were here today, speaking about loving somebody a lot. When I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian, didn't much care for politics or politicians. [*Laughter*] She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that pledge. She's speaking a lot, and when she does, the American people get to see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady in Laura Bush.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He did a great job in his debate the other night. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for his hairdo. I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience. I picked him because he's getting the job done for the American people.

I'm honored to be on the platform with the next United States Senator from Colorado, Pete Coors. I hope when you're turning out the vote for me, you turn out the vote for Pete as well. He'll be taking the place of a really fine fellow in Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I've enjoyed working with Senator Campbell. He's served your State well. And Pete will be serving alongside another fine United States Senator in Wayne Allard. I appreciate Wayne being here. Thanks for coming, Joan. It's good to see you.

I'm honored to be on the stage with a great Governor of the State of Colorado, Bill Owens. He's doing a fine job. I know something about being a Governor. I was one.

You've got a great Congressman from this district in Joel Hefley. I'm proud that he's here, and how about his wife, State Representative Lynn Hefley. I told Joel the other

day, he better hope Lynn doesn't run him in the Republican primary. [*Laughter*]

You know, I got to meet your mayor when I came to give the graduation speech at the Air Force Academy, and I was very impressed by Lionel Rivera, Mr. Mayor. What a good man he is. And I want to thank his wife, Lynn, for being here as well. I want to thank all the State and local officials who have joined us.

I want to thank Sammy Kershaw for being here and entertaining. I want to thank The Walker Williams Band for being here and entertaining everybody. I appreciate the members of the Olympic team who've joined us today, Shane Hamman and Matt Emmons. I'm honored you all are here.

I appreciate those who are here serving in our United States military. I want to thank your families—of the men and women who wear the uniform. Thank you for your sacrifice and your dedication. I want to thank all the veterans who are here today. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

I want to thank the grassroots activists for what you're going to do, to put up the signs and make the phone calls, turn out the vote. There's no doubt we'll carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I'm on my way to Arizona for the final debate. Those debates have highlighted the clear differences between the Senator and me on issues ranging from jobs to taxes to health care to the war on terror. Much as he's tried to obscure it, on issue after issue, my opponent has showed why he earned his ranking as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And several of his statements he made in the last debate simply do not pass the credibility test. With a straight face, he said he'd had only one position on Iraq. [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. In the spring of 2003, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power." Now, he says, "It's the wrong war." In the same debate, he said Saddam was a threat, and then a few minutes later, he said there wasn't a threat in Iraq. And he tries to tell us he's had only one position. Who's he trying to kid? See, he can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." The facts are, 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program, see. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Then he was asked to look into the camera—[*laughter*]—and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise, he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two brackets would raise, we think, about $600 billion. But his spending plan costs almost 4 times that much, about $2.2 trillion. See, you can't have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he's going to have to raise your taxes. He can run, but he cannot hide.

You know, after listening to the litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [*Laughter*] See, I have a different philosophy. I'm a compassionate conservative. I think Government ought to help people realize their dreams, not tell them how to live their lives. I've led this country with principle and resolve, and that's how I'm going to lead it, with your help, for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. My plan for a more hopeful America begins with a growing economy that creates good jobs. See, I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers, our small-business owners, our farmers, our ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out convincing people to vote and to come our way, remind them what this economy and this country has been through. Six months before we got to Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. It foreshadowed a recession. Then we found out some of our citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible American, and they didn't tell the truth. We passed tough laws to make

it abundantly clear we won't tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. Those scandals hurt our economy. And then we got attacked. And the attack cost America 1 million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But we acted. We put tax relief in place, and this recession was one of the shallowest in American history. The tax relief spurred consumption and investment. And as a result, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. In the past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate nationally is 5.4 percent—lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in the State of Colorado is 5.1 percent. The homeownership rate is at alltime high in America. More minorities own a home than ever before in the history of this country. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're moving forward, but there's more work to be done.

In order to make sure jobs are here in America, in order to make sure there's hope in this country when it comes to finding work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on our employers. That means legal reforms so these junk lawsuits don't make it hard for people to find a job.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, Congress needed to pass my energy plan. See, it's a plan that encourages conservation. We spend money on research and development to expand the use of renewables, technologies to help us live different ways at the same lifestyle we're accustomed to, technologies to help us use coal in environmentally friendly ways. I believe we can explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here, we got to open up markets for U.S. products. See, we don't want to be closing down markets. We're going to be opening markets. It's to your advantage that our market is open from products for overseas. See, if you've got more choices to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. So I'm telling places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You treat us in a way that opens up your markets," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. Raising taxes would be the wrong prescription for economic growth. You've heard my opponent—I talked a little bit a while ago about it—he said, oh, he's going to pay for all his programs by taxing the rich. We've heard that kind of rhetoric before. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—[*laughter*]—to pass the tax bill on to you. We're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Speaking about the Tax Code, it is a complicated mess. It's a million pages long. We spend 6 billion hours a year filling out taxes. I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together in a new term to simplify the Tax Code and make it more fair for the American people.

Listen, in order to make sure we can compete in a global war, we've got to educate our workforce. It all starts with making sure our youngsters can read and write and add and subtract. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. That's what happened in too many classrooms in America, where they would just shuffle the kid through, you know, the so-called "hard-to-educate," an inner-city kid, shuffle him through, or maybe a child whose parents didn't speak English as a first language. "Let's just move him through." See, that's not the America I know. I believe every child can learn. I expect every school to teach. That is why we now measure, so we can solve problems early, before they are too late—before it is too late. We can't have children coming out the back end of the school system that can't read and write and add and subtract anymore, if we expect to compete in the 21st century. Do you realize we're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity in our schools.

There is more work to be done. I believe we ought to fund at-risk programs in our high schools. I believe we ought to emphasize math and science. I believe, over time, we

ought to have a rigorous exam before graduation. I know we'll continue to expand Pell grants for low- and middle-income families. We want more of our kids who graduate to start their career with a college diploma.

To build a more hopeful America, we've got to make sure health care is more available and affordable. We'll have a safety net for those with the greatest need. I'm a strong proponent of community health centers. These are places where the poor and the indigent can get preventative and primary care. It's best they get the care in these centers and not in the emergency rooms around our country. It is a compassionate way to make sure people get the help they need. We will continue to make sure our health programs for low-income children are fully subscribed to. But we also must address this issue of affordability.

Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. We should allow small businesses to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can do. I know we need to continue to expand health savings accounts, accounts where people can buy low-premium policies to cover major medical expenses and can set money aside on a tax-free basis to be able to cover their health care needs.

These are vital plans which will help our small businesses, help our young uninsured. These are plans where workers will own their own accounts, so they can base their medical decisions on the advice from their doctor, not in negotiations with an HMO. These are some commonsense, practical ways to make sure health care is available and affordable, without increasing the reach of the Federal Government.

Let me tell you one other practical way to deal with the cost of health care. We've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice, frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. See, you can't be pro-lawyer—I mean, pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we'll do to improve health care, this administration will make sure that the decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

You know, I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. And I saw a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't. And I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Let me tell you what I'm talking about, about modernizing and Medicare wasn't. You realize we would pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery under Medicare but not one dime for the prescription drug that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That did not make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. And so I worked with Republicans and Democrats to modernize Medicare. And now, in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage for the first time under Medicare.

Let me talk about Social Security. You might remember the campaign rhetoric of 2000 when they said, "If old George W. gets elected, they're going to take away your check," to our seniors. You still got your check, didn't you? Just remember that, when we talk about how to make sure the Social Security system works for our youngsters. See, baby boomers are okay when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren if we want to make sure Social Security is available to them. We've got to think differently. And so one of the good ideas that I believe is necessary—an idea by the way, that came out of a Commission I formed to take a look at Social Security, headed by the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat from New York—was that younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set aside a personal savings account that will earn a better rate of return than the current Social Security system does, so they will

have the capacity to be able to realize benefits from a retirement system, a personal account they call their own, and a personal account the Government cannot take away.

We're living in changing times, and that can be unsettling. That's why I've promoted an ownership society throughout our country. We're living in changing times, but there's some things that don't change, reverence and integrity, compassion and courage. The values we try to live by don't change. In changing times, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. We've got a clear strategy. We'll defend the homeland. We'll strengthen our intelligence-gathering services. We'll transform our military so it can do its job. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will continue to work to spread liberty and peace. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think of the world the way it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Al Qaida—Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place, run by a sworn enemy of America. Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and they held Presidential elections last weekend. Because we acted, Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. We knew he hated our country. We knew he had invaded another country. We knew he was shooting missiles at American pilots who were enforcing the sanctions of the world. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we knew that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. That's one of the key lessons that we must never forget in order to protect the American people.

In Saddam Hussein, I saw a threat. And I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history my administration remembered. And they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at. And he came to the same conclusion, and he voted "yes" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before I ever commit troops into harm's way, or any President, we must try all means to deal with the threat. No President ever wants to send our young into harm's way. No President ever wants to have to do that. So I went to the United Nations in hopes that diplomacy would work. That was my hope. I hoped that the free world would come together and make its voice clear, which it did. The Security Council voted 15 to nothing and said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." Now, I believe that when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says. And that goes for the President as well.

Saddam Hussein had no intention of listening to the demands of the free world. He ignored the resolution. He deceived the inspectors that were trying to get into—that were in his country. Why should he change? This is resolution number 17. Resolution after resolution after resolution had been passed, and nothing happened. He wasn't about to listen. As a matter of fact, when we gave him the final chance, he continued to deceive and evade. So I have a choice to make at this point in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

We did not find the stockpiles that we all thought were there. But I want to remind you what the Duelfer report said. It said that Saddam Hussein retained the intent, the knowledge, and therefore, the capability to rebuild his weapons programs. Now, think about that. It also said that he was gaming the system, using the Oil for Food Programme to try to convince—the polite way of saying it—[*laughter*]—officials of other nations to get rid of the sanctions that were already weakening. And why would he do that? Well, because he wanted the world to look the other way so he could restart his weapons programs. The greatest danger we face is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terrorist enemy. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein in a prison cell.

Because we acted in Afghanistan and Iraq, America is safer and 50 million people now live in freedom. Think about what happened in Afghanistan over the past weekend. You know, it wasn't all that long ago that young girls were not allowed to go to school. Their mothers were pulled out in the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of these ideologues of hate. The Taliban were backward and barbaric. They had a dark view of the world. This past weekend, millions of Afghan citizens voted for their President. The first voter was an Afghan woman, a 19-year-old woman. That society has gone from darkness to light because of freedom. Freedom is powerful.

Iraq will have elections in January. They got a strong Prime Minister. We're fighting off the terrorists who are trying to prevent the elections from happening. Freedom frightens these ideologues of hatred. They can't stand the thought of free societies.

It's in our interest that we expand freedom. It's in our interest that when we tell the Afghan people and the Iraq people we'll stand with them, that we keep our word. It's in our interest that free societies emerge in the broader Middle East, because they will be hopeful societies, societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. And that helps us keep the peace. Free societies are peaceful societies.

And so our mission is clear. We will help these countries, Afghanistan and Iraq, train their armies and their police so they can do the hard work of defending democracy. We'll help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I made a commitment to our troops and their families that we'll make sure they have the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and requested $87 billion of supplemental funding. This is really important money. This is money to help our troops in harm's way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. And I was pleased that we received strong bipartisan support for the funding request. It was so strong that only 12 Senators—United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. [*Laughter*] Now, I want to tell you another statistic. Let me just tell you another revealing statistic. There were 4 United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way, only 4 out of 100, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's got to tell you something. So they asked him why, and he issued perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

[*Laughter*] Now, since then, he's given numerous explanations for why he made the vote. One of the most interesting was he just finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Listen, on national security, just like domestic policy, we've got big differences between us. I want you to remember that my opponent has had a record—a record in 20 years in the United States Senate. He's had a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He had a record—in 1993, after we got the first World Trade Center attack, he voted to cut the intelligence budget by $7.5 billion. See, that's part of his thinking. That's record. That happened. He now says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Think about that, a "global test." The problem is he could never pass his own test. [*Laughter*] I want you to remember this, now, when you're out gathering people to vote. In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined the coalition. Yet, in the United States Senate, after the Security Council resolution, after it became clear there was international support, Senator Kerry voted against the authorization of force. Listen, if driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait with the support of the international community does not meet his test, nothing will.

And that is dangerous, a dangerous way of thinking in the world in which we live. We have a different view of our role confronting threats. Just this weekend we saw new evidence that the Senator fundamentally misunderstands the war against terror. See, earlier he questioned whether this is really a war at all, describing it as primarily a law enforcement and intelligence-gathering operation, instead of a threat that demands the full use of American power. And this weekend he talked of reducing terrorism to, quote, "nuisance"—his word—and compared it to prostitution and illegal gambling.

Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying the networks, and spreading freedom and liberty.

During the next 4 years, I will work with our friends and allies. We'll continue to build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I like to use my friend Prime Minister Koizumi to explain what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. I saw him in New York in early September, and I—at the United Nations—and I said, "By the way, I'm talking about you on the campaign trail. Do you mind if I continue to do so?" He said, "Not at all." I didn't ask him whether or not I could tell you whether or not Elvis was his favorite singer. [*Laughter*] It's true. [*Laughter*] One of his favorite movies is "High Noon," by the way.

Anyway—[*laughter*]—so I like to bring him up because he's the head of a country that some 60 years ago we were at war with. My dad fought against the Japanese. I'm sure there's some in this audience who did so, and I know some dads and granddads did as well.

And after the war, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the transformational power of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally. That's what he believed. So did a lot of other Americans. But there was some great skepticism of what that could mean. You know, we were working for democracy in Japan. A lot of people in this country said, "Why do it? Why bother? Why should we care? They were the enemy." You could understand; families' lives had been turned upside down because of the death of a loved one during that war. People were questioning whether or not it was worthwhile.

But fortunately, they believed in the power of liberty, and today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, the head of Japan, talking about the peace, talking about how the United States and Japan, former enemies and now allies, can work together to achieve the peace we all want for our children and our grandchildren.

I believe we'll succeed in Iraq. I believe there will be a democracy. And I envision the day, someday, when an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq are sitting down at the table talking about achieving the peace, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions plead in silence in the Middle East for freedom. I believe that women in the Middle East want to have a free society and have their children grow up in a free society. I believe that if given a chance, the people in the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve and clear vision and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There was workers in hardhats there, yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember doing my best to console those people coming out of the rubble. They were there lined up, and we were heading down the ropeline—Rudy Giuliani and Governor Pataki and I were going down the line thanking people and hugging them. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. at the Colorado Springs World Arena and Ice Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Joan Allard, wife of Senator Wayne Allard; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado; Mayor Lionel Rivera of Colorado Springs, CO, and his wife, Lynn; country music entertainers Sammy Kershaw and The Walker Williams Band; Shane Hamman, weightlifter, and Matt Emmons, shooter, U.S. Olympic team; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; and Gov. George E. Pataki of New York. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in Paradise Valley, Arizona

October 12, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. I want to thank my friends Jon Kyl and John McCain for their leadership. They're good, honest people, and they're good to work with, and they do a great job representing Arizona. I presume you want me to sign the water bill. [*Laughter*] No wonder you're here.

Anyway, I finally made it to Arizona—back to Arizona. You know, we're kind of warming up for these debates. I'm looking forward to tomorrow night. It's a chance to point out major differences. For example, if the Senator has his way, this is the way every house will feel, because he doesn't have an energy policy. But it's going to be a lot of fun. I want to thank Arizona State for hosting the debate, and thank the good city of Phoenix and Tempe for being such gracious hosts.

I'm—will be teaming up here in a minute with Laura. She's been working her way from east to west. She and little Barbara are campaigning New Mexico today, and Jenna introduced me in Colorado Springs. And I was sitting there watching that gracious young lady introduce me in front of 10,000 people, saying, "My, does time fly," you know. [*Laughter*] It's an unbelievable feeling, really. I told the girls when they were young, I said, "Oh, don't worry, we'll go on the famous father-daughter camping trip," come to the Grand Canyon, maybe ride down the Colorado River. This is the grand camping

trip we never took them on, campaigning for President. [*Laughter*] But it's a lot of fun to have your family out there.

I tell people—and this is true—I think it's true; it's got some truth to it, at least—that either when I asked her or shortly thereafter, Laura said, you know, "I never want to have to give a political speech. I'll marry you, but I don't want to give a speech." I said, "Okay, you got a deal." And—but fortunately, she didn't hold me to the deal. The American people have gotten to see her as a warm, compassionate, great First Lady.

It's such an honor to serve the people. You know, people say, "Well, gosh, that's interesting. What's it like on your marriage, you know, being the President and First Lady?" I say, "It strengthened our marriage. After all, I've only got a 45-second commute." [*Laughter*] But we're representing the country together, and Laura has come to know what I know, that we have a chance to really do some good things for people. And I remember when she gave the radio address to the—and spoke to the women of Afghanistan, made it very clear that the American people were standing with them as they went from tyranny to freedom. And the feedback was fantastic, and she realized what I know as well, that just simple gestures and kind—moments of kindness can really make a difference in people's lives and can help lift spirits and make a valuable contribution to the future of the country.

I tell people that I'm going to give you some reasons why to put me back in. Tomorrow night, that's part of the purpose, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. [*Laughter*]

And my runningmate is doing just fine. I talk to him quite frequently. I think I'm going to see him tomorrow on a video—on a SVTS, we call it, which is a secure two-way conversation via video. We talk about national security needs. And he's doing great. He's holding his own. He did a wonderful job in the debate. I tell people he doesn't have the—I tell people plainly the fact, and that is, he doesn't have the waviest hair there amongst the candidates. But I didn't pick him for his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience, and he's getting the job done. And I'm real proud of Dick Cheney and proud to serve with him.

I want to thank Members of the Congress who are here. Trent and Josie Franks are with us. It's great to see you all. Thanks for coming. You're doing a fine job, and I'm proud you're here. Shadegg is with us. Where is John? Somewhere, anyway. Either that or he's outside trying to find some cool air. [*Laughter*] I want to thank J.D. and Mary Hayworth. They're with us today. Big J.D., appreciate you coming. Jeff and Cheryl Flake—there he is. Thanks for coming. I'm glad to see you all.

The mayor is with us, Ron Clarke, of the town of Paradise, Arizona. What a fantastic name, Paradise. What a great name. You know who is here? I'm a member of the ex-Governors club, and my old buddy, the ex-Governor of the State of Arizona is with us, Fife Symington. I appreciate you coming. You look great, for an older guy—no. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friend Jim Click. I appreciate his leadership. Several people came through the line and said, "I'm Click's friend." I said, well, "I'm sorry." [*Laughter*] But thanks for coming. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my—longtime friend of Mother and Dad's and mine, Jim Simmons. I appreciate Jim, and thank you for being here. I don't know if many people know this, but he used to live in Midland, Texas. And that's where Laura is from. That's where I'm from. Mother and Dad were living out there, and they became fast friends. You can't make it in this line of work unless your friends stay with you. That's just the way it is, and I appreciate Jim.

Bob Castellini and Susie are here. They've helped on this event. I want to thank my longtime friend Bob Castellini. I want to thank Dave Thompson. I want to thank the chairman of the Republican Party of Arizona, Bob Fannin, and his wife, Lisa.

Let's see here—21 days from today, the people will be going to the polls.

Audience member. You've got my vote!

The President. That's good. [*Laughter*] I certainly hope so. [*Laughter*] I don't know who is counting the days. I guess—but my spirits are high. I feel great. I really feel like

the people—I got a good record to run on. I went to Washington to do some things.

You might remind people about what this economy has been through. The stock market was declining 6 months before I arrived in Washington, DC. We had one of the most significant stock market corrections in our history, and it foretold a recession. And then we got attacked, which cost us a million jobs. But we acted. I acted. I led the Congress. We cut the taxes in order to create consumption and investment, and this recession was one of the shallowest in American history.

We're on the move. Jobs are being created. There's a sense of optimism everywhere I go. Do you realize that there are more homeowners today than ever before? More minorities own their home than ever before in the history of the United States. What a fantastic, fantastic statistic.

The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. I mean, I meet small-business owners all over who feel like tomorrow will be a better day, in part because of the policies we have put in place. Listen, farmers are doing well, and that's good. When you got a good ag economy, you got a good economy. Think about that. The agricultural sector is doing well, which means rural America is doing well. There are bright spots all over this country.

And what I'm going to tell the people tomorrow night is we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend. We're not going to go back to the days where—kind of the vision of economic policy is, "We're going to take your money, and we'll decide what to do with it." Running up the taxes on the American people right now would be bad for our economy, and we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in Arizona, and we're going to win in November.

So it's—you can't run on your record, see, you got to run on—the only reason you look at your record is to say, "I did what I said I was going to do, and now here's what I'm going to do." And the best way to make sure jobs stay here is to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations. That means legal reform. That means a commonsense energy policy that will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That means opening up markets for U.S. goods.

One of the interesting debates in this campaign is about trade. I go around telling the people, "Look, we open up our markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you." I explain to them that when you have more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the market works. So rather than preventing you from having more choices, I think what we ought to do is to say to countries, "You treat us the way we treat you." Let's open up markets for U.S. products and U.S. goods and U.S. services. And that's how you keep jobs here in America.

And you keep jobs here in America by being wise about how we spend your money. I look forward to working with Senators McCain and Kyl about—to bring some fiscal sanity to Washington, DC. But you're not going to have fiscal sanity with John Kerry as the President. He's been the most liberal Member of the United States Senate, which means he likes to spend your money. That's what that means. Now, he can try to run from his record, but I'm not going to let him hide.

A couple of other quick points before people start to fall out here—[*laughter*]—including me. [*Laughter*] I can't wait for the health care debate. It's clear in this campaign; there's a difference of opinion. He said the other day, the Government doesn't have anything to do with his plan. When he said that I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] Of course, the Government has something to do with his plan. It's the cornerstone of his plan. It's the crux of his health care policy, to expand the Federal Government.

I have a different view. I mean, we've got to address costs with medical liability reform. We got to address costs with structural reforms by giving consumers more choice in the marketplace. That's how you begin to control costs. And that's why I'm such a big believer in health savings accounts. I could give you the whole litany, but what I'm telling you is, is that there is a vast difference of opinion about health care. And I'm absolutely confident our view is the way to help make sure health care is available and affordable.

I'm looking forward to talking about education. This is a subject about which I've got

great passion. We reformed our—the way the Federal Government looks at schools. We measure now, in return for extra Federal money. You've got to measure if you want to save people's lives. You've got to measure if you want to educate every child. If you don't diagnose the problem, you can't solve it.

Listen, I'm looking forward to debating tomorrow night on domestic issues that will make a difference. I'm looking forward to probably spending a little time, hopefully, on the war on terror because there's a big difference of opinion on the war on terror.

Let me tell you a couple of things, and we'll all go home and find some air-conditioning. First, you got to understand the nature of the enemy. They are coldblooded. They have no conscience, and you can't negotiate with them, and you can't hope for the best with these people. We must find them overseas so we don't have to face them here, and that's exactly what we're doing.

A couple of other things. Secondly is that in this different kind of war, it is important to send clear and understandable messages, such as, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." See, it's one thing to go after the terrorist networks, which we'll continue to do, but we also got to go after those people who harbor them and support them. And that's what I meant when I told the Taliban to get rid of Al Qaida or face serious consequences. They didn't listen, and they're no longer in power.

And I want you to remind your friends and neighbors about what took place this weekend. It is a phenomenal statement about democracy and freedom. Do you realize the first person that voted in the Presidential election was a 19-year-old girl? That's unbelievable. It's an unbelievable thought. Imagine what is happening in that society because of freedom. And it's in our Nation's interest that we promote freedom in places like Afghanistan and elsewhere, because Afghanistan is now an ally in the war on terror and such a bright example of what is possible in parts of the world that are desperate for free societies.

The third lesson is that we've got to deal with threats before they come to hurt us. That's the reality of September the 11th. Saddam was a threat. We didn't find the stockpiles we thought were there, but remember what the report last week said. It said he was gaming the Oil for Food Programme to convince governments to get rid of—weaken or get rid of the sanction program for one reason, to use his expertise to rebuild his weapons. And what could he do with the weapons? He could share them with a terrorist enemy, which would make the harm done on September the 11th mild in comparison to what they could do. That's the true threat we face. And therefore, it's incumbent upon a President to face those threats before they come to hurt us. And that's exactly what we did in Iraq. Getting rid of Saddam Hussein was the right thing to do, and the world is safer for it.

And we'll succeed in Iraq. We've got a plan, and we're moving toward elections. Think about a—they're going to have elections in January. It's dangerous there, and there's a reason. These terrorists want to stop us. They want us to quit. They can't stand the thought of a free society in their midst. They understand how powerful Iraq will be as an example of people being able to live in a free society.

I believe everybody wants to be free. I believe women in the Middle East want to live in a free world. I know mothers from all walks of life and all religions want to raise their children in a free society. I know that, and at the core of my belief is that people want to be free because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. That's what I believe.

Let me tell you one story—one story, and then we'll all go home here. [*Laughter*] There's already enough hot air in here to begin with. [*Laughter*] I tell people I believe in the transformational power of liberty. And I put it—I try to put it in terms so everybody can understand what I'm saying. And I use my friend Koizumi as an example about what I mean. Now, he's the Prime Minister of Japan. Laura and I are very fond of him. He's an interesting, interesting man. His favorite singer is Elvis—[*laughter*]—one of his favorite—pretty unusual. And one of his favorite movies is "High Noon." [*Laughter*]

And I sit down with him and talk to him quite frequently. And what I find amazing

is that I am talking to him at all, because it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were at war with Japan. Japan was the sworn enemy. My dad fought the Japanese. McCain's dad fought the Japanese. Your dads, granddads were at war with the Japanese.

And after we won, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. Think about what that must have been like for the President, to stand up to the American people and say, "We're going to help our enemy become a democracy. We'll help Japan, not hurt Japan, the enemy, but we'll help lift up Japan as a free nation."

And there were great doubters and skeptics, and you can understand why. Many lives had been turned up-side-down. "Who wants to help an enemy," some probably asked. But Truman and other Americans stood true to the belief that liberty is a powerful, powerful concept.

And so today, as a result of their belief, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace that we all want. We talk about how to keep the peace on the Korean Peninsula. We're talking about how to spread democracy and freedom. We talk about how to help the people of Afghanistan and Iraq realize their dreams to live in a free society. He knows what I know: Free societies will yield a more peaceful world. And I'm talking to a former enemy about peace.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a leader from Iraq, elected by the people, talking about how to keep the peace in a troubled part of the world, talking about how to spread liberty to corners of the world that need liberty, talking about how to make sure the example of a free society shines brightly for all. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

The stakes are high. The stakes are high in this campaign. We have a competing different—competing visions on Government, and we have a different view of the war on terror. It's not just to be reduced as a "nuisance." It is to be defeated by using all the might of the United States and spreading freedom as an alternative. And make no mistake about it, with the firm resolve and clear vision, we will prevail.

And I want to thank you for your help. God bless you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:46 p.m. at the Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain. In his remarks, he referred to Josephine Franks, wife of Representative Trent Franks; Mary Hayworth, wife of Representative J.D. Hayworth; Cheryl Flake, wife of Representative Jeff Flake; Mayor Ron Clarke of Paradise Valley, AZ; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Proclamation 7831—National School Lunch Week, 2004

October 12, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The National School Lunch Program has provided healthy, affordable lunches to our Nation's children for almost 60 years. The program now serves more than 28 million children each day, many of whom might not otherwise eat nutritious lunches. During National School Lunch Week, we recognize the program's contributions to the health, well-being, and education of our Nation's youth.

In addition to providing the good nutrition that helps young people succeed in school, healthy school lunches and after-school snacks can help alleviate childhood obesity and lower children's risk of developing health problems. The National School Lunch Program also shares information about healthy eating habits with children, families, and communities; works to provide our children with the best possible school meals; and offers technical training and assistance to school food-service staff. To support this program and other important child nutrition programs, earlier this year I signed into law the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This bill expands access to programs for children of Armed Services personnel, promotes healthy food choices, and makes it easier for parents to enroll their eligible children.

The National School Lunch Program has accomplished a great deal in providing children with nutritious meals, and we must continue working to ensure that every child is well-nourished, healthy, and active. While children who participate in the school lunch program consume more fruits, vegetables, milk, and protein than students who obtain lunch elsewhere, over 60 percent of our Nation's young people still eat more than the daily recommended serving of fat, and less than 20 percent eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. To promote the right choices, the Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge is encouraging schools and local communities to create an environment that supports healthy lifestyles for our Nation's children.

The success of the National School Lunch Program stems from the hard-working Americans who plan, prepare, and serve meals to millions of children every day. In recognition of the contributions of the National School Lunch Program to the health, education, and well-being of America's children, the Congress, by joint resolution of October 9, 1962 (Public Law 87–780), as amended, has designated the week beginning on the second Sunday of October of each year as "National School Lunch Week" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 10 through October 16, 2004, as National School Lunch Week. I call upon all Americans to join the dedicated individuals who administer the National School Lunch Program in appropriate activities that support the health and well-being of our Nation's children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:22 a.m., October 13, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 14.

Presidential Debate in Tempe, Arizona

October 13, 2004

Bob Schieffer. Good evening from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. I'm Bob Schieffer of CBS News. I want to welcome you to the third and last of the 2004 debates between President George Bush and Senator John Kerry.

As Jim Lehrer told you before the first one, these debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Tonight the topic will be domestic affairs, but the format will be the same as that first debate. I'll moderate our discussion under detailed rules agreed to by the candidates, but the questions and the areas to be covered were chosen by me. I have not told the candidates or anyone else what they are.

To refresh your memory on the rules, I will ask a question. The candidate is allowed 2 minutes to answer. His opponent then has a minute and a half to offer a rebuttal. At my discretion, I can extend the discussion by offering each candidate an additional 30 seconds. A green light will come on to signal the candidate has 30 seconds left; a yellow light signals 15 seconds left; a red light means 5 seconds left. There is also a buzzer if it is needed. The candidates may not question each other directly. There are no opening statements, but there will be 2-minute closing statements.

There is an audience here tonight, but they have agreed to remain silent, except for right now, when they join me in welcoming President George Bush and Senator John Kerry.

Gentlemen, welcome to you both. By coin toss, the first question goes to Senator Kerry.

Homeland Security

Senator, I want to set the stage for this discussion by asking the question that I think hangs over all of our politics today and is probably on the minds of many people watching this debate tonight, and that is: Will our children and grandchildren ever live in a world as safe and secure as the world in which we grew up?

Senator Kerry. Well, first of all, Bob, thank you for moderating tonight. Thank you, Arizona State, for welcoming us. And thank

you to the Presidential Commission for undertaking this enormous task. We're proud to be here. Mr. President, I'm glad to be here with you again to share similarities and differences with the American people.

Will we ever be safe and secure again? Yes, we absolutely must be. That's the goal. Now, how do we achieve it is the most critical component of it. I believe that this President, regrettably, rushed us into a war, made decisions about foreign policy, pushed alliances away, and as a result, America is now bearing this extraordinary burden where we are not as safe as we ought to be.

The measurement is not: Are we safer? The measurement is: Are we as safe as we ought to be? And there are a host of options that this President had available to him, like making sure that at all our ports in America, containers are inspected. Only 95 percent of them—95 percent come in today uninspected. That's not good enough. People who fly on airplanes today—the cargo hold is not X-rayed, but the baggage is. That's not good enough. Firehouses don't have enough firefighters in them. Police officers are being cut from the streets of America because the President decided to cut the COPS program.

So we can do a better job of homeland security. I can do a better job of waging a smarter, more effective war on terror and guarantee that we go after the terrorists. I will hunt them down, and we'll kill them. We'll capture them. We'll do what's ever necessary to be safe. But I pledge this to you, America: I will do it in the way that Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan and John Kennedy and others did, where we build the strongest alliances, where the world joins together, where we have the best intelligence, and where we are able, ultimately, to be more safe and secure.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, you have 90 seconds.

President Bush. Bob, thank you very much. I want to thank Arizona State as well.

Yes, we can be safe and secure if we stay on the offense against the terrorists and if we spread freedom and liberty around the world. I have got a comprehensive strategy to not only chase down Al Qaida, wherever it exists—and we're making progress; three-quarters of Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice—but to make sure that countries who harbor terrorists are held to account. As a result of securing ourselves and ridding the Taliban out of Afghanistan, the Afghan people had elections this weekend. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Think about that. Freedom is on the march. We held to account a terrorist regime in Saddam Hussein.

In other words, in order to make sure we're secure, there must be a comprehensive plan. My opponent, just this weekend, talked about how terrorism could be reduced to a "nuisance," comparing it to prostitution and illegal gambling. I think that attitude and that point of view is dangerous. I don't think you can secure America for the long run if you don't have a comprehensive view as to how to defeat these people.

At home, we'll do everything we can to protect the homeland. I signed the homeland security bill to better align our assets and resources. My opponent voted against it. We're doing everything we can to protect our borders and ports. But absolutely, we can be secure in the long run. It just takes good, strong leadership.

Mr. Schieffer. Anything to add, Senator Kerry?

Senator Kerry. Yes. When the President had an opportunity to capture or kill Usama bin Laden, he took his focus off of him, outsourced the job to Afghan warlords, and Usama bin Laden escaped. Six months after he said, "Usama bin Laden must be caught, dead or alive," this President was asked, "Where is Usama bin Laden?" He said, "I don't know. I don't really think about him very much. I'm not that concerned." We need a President who stays deadly focused on the real war on terror.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

Senator Kerry. Gosh, I don't think I ever said I'm not worried about Usama bin Laden. That's kind of one of those exaggerations. Of course, we're worried about Usama bin Laden. We're on the hunt after Usama bin Laden. We're using every asset at our disposal to get Usama bin Laden.

My opponent said this war is a matter of intelligence and law enforcement. No, this is a—war is a matter of using every asset at

our disposal to keep the American people protected.

Flu Vaccine Shortage/Health Care

Mr. Schieffer. New question, Mr. President, to you. We're talking about protecting ourselves from the unexpected, but the flu season is suddenly upon us. Flu kills thousands of people every year. Suddenly we find ourselves with a severe shortage of flu vaccine. How did that happen?

President Bush. Bob, we relied upon a company out of England to provide about half of the flu vaccines for the United States citizen, and it turned out that the vaccine they were producing was contaminated. And so we took the right action and didn't allow contaminated medicine into our country. We're working with Canada to, hopefully—that they'll produce a—help us realize the vaccine necessary to make sure our citizens have got flu vaccinations during this upcoming season.

My call to our fellow Americans is, if you're healthy, if you're younger, don't get a flu shot this year. Help us prioritize those who need to get the flu shot, the elderly and the young. The CDC, responsible for health in the United States, is setting those priorities and is allocating the flu vaccine accordingly. I haven't gotten a flu shot, and I don't intend to, because I want to make sure that those who are most vulnerable get treated.

We have a problem with litigation in the United States of America. Vaccine manufacturers are worried about getting sued, and so, therefore, they have backed off from providing this kind of vaccine. One of the reasons I'm such a strong believer in legal reform is so that people aren't afraid of producing a product that is necessary for the health of our citizens and then end up getting sued in a court of law.

But the best thing we can do now, Bob, given the circumstances with the company in England, is for those of us who are younger and healthy, don't get a flu shot.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. This really underscores the problem with the American health care system. It's not working for the American family, and it's gotten worse under President Bush over the course of the last years. Five million Americans have lost their health insurance in this country. You got about a million right here in Arizona—just shy, 950,000—who have no health insurance at all. Eighty-two thousand Arizonians lost their health insurance under President Bush's watch. Two hundred and twenty-three thousand kids in Arizona have no health insurance at all. All across our country—go to Ohio, 1.4 million Ohioans have no health insurance; 114,000 of them lost it under President Bush; Wisconsin, 82,000 Wisconsinites lost it under President Bush.

This President has turned his back on the wellness of America, and there is no system. In fact, it's starting to fall apart, not because of lawsuits—though they are a problem, and John Edwards and I are committed to fixing them—but because of the larger issue that we don't cover Americans. Children across our country don't have health care. We're the richest country on the face of the planet, the only industrialized nation in the world not to do it. I have a plan to cover all Americans. We're going to make it affordable and accessible. We're going to let everybody buy into the same health care plan the Senators and Congressmen give themselves.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, would you like to add something?

President Bush. I would, thank you. I want to remind people listening tonight that a plan is not a litany of complaints, and a plan is not to lay out programs that you can't pay for. He just said he wants everybody to be able to buy into the same plan that Senators and Congressman get. That costs the Government $7,700 per family. If every family in America signed up like the Senator suggested, it would cost us $5 trillion over 10 years. It's an empty promise. It's called bait and switch.

Mr. Schieffer. Time is up.

President Bush. Thank you.

Senator Kerry. Actually, it's not an empty promise. It's really interesting because the President used that very plan as a reason for seniors to accept his prescription drug plan. He said, "If it's good enough for the Congressmen and Senators to have choice, seniors ought to have choice."

What we do is we have choice. I choose Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Other Senators,

other Congressman choose other programs. But the fact is we're going to help Americans be able to buy into it. Those that can afford it are going to buy in themselves. We're not giving this away for nothing.

Paying for New Federal Spending/Taxes

Mr. Schieffer. All right, Senator Kerry, a new question. Let's talk about economic security. You pledged during the last debate that you would not raise taxes on those making less than $200,000 a year. But the price of everything is going up, and we all know it. Health care costs, as you all are talking about, is skyrocketing, the cost of the war. My question is, how can you or any President, whoever is elected next time, keep that pledge without running this country deeper into debt and passing on more of the bills that we're running up to our children?

Senator Kerry. I'll tell you exactly how I can do it: by reinstating what President Bush took away, which is called pay as you go. During the 1990s, we had pay-as-you-go rules. If you were going to pass something in the Congress, you had to show where you were going to pay for it and how.

President Bush has taken—he's the only President in history to do this. He's also the only President since—in 72 years to lose jobs, 1.6 million jobs lost. He's the only President to have incomes of families go down for the last 3 years, the only President to see exports go down, the only President to see the lowest level of business investment in our country as it is today.

Now, I'm going to reverse that. I'm going to change that. We're going to restore the fiscal discipline we had in the 1990s. Every plan that I have laid out, my health care plan, my plan for education, my plan for kids to be able to get better college loans, I've shown exactly how I'm going to pay for those. And we start—we don't do it exclusively, but we start by rolling back George Bush's unaffordable tax cut for the wealthiest people, people earning more than $200,000 a year, and we pass, hopefully, the McCain/Kerry commission, which identified some $60 billion that we can get. We shut the loophole which has American workers actually subsidizing the loss of their own job. They just passed an expansion of that loophole in the last few days, $43 billion of giveaways, including favors to the oil and gas industry and to people importing ceiling fans from China.

I'm going to stand up and fight for the American worker, and I'm going to do it in a way that's fiscally sound. I show how I pay for the health care, how we pay for the education. I have a manufacturing jobs credit. We pay for it by shutting that loophole overseas. We raise the student loans. I pay for it by changing the relationship with the banks. This President has never once vetoed one bill, the first President in 100 years not to do that.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. Well, his rhetoric doesn't match his record. He's been a Senator for 20 years. He voted to increase taxes 98 times. When they tried to reduce taxes, he voted against that 127 times. He talks about being a fiscal conservative or fiscally sound, but he voted over—he voted 277 times to waive the budget caps, which would have cost the taxpayers $4.2 trillion. He talks about pay-go—I'll tell you what pay-go means when you're a Senator from Massachusetts, when you're a colleague of Ted Kennedy: Pay-go means you pay, and he goes ahead and spends.

He's proposed $2.2 trillion of new spending, and yet the so-called tax on the rich, which is also a tax on many small-business owners in America, raises 600 million by our account—billion—800 billion by his account. There is a tax gap. And guess who usually ends up filling the tax gap? The middle class.

I proposed a detailed budget, Bob. I sent up my budget man to the Congress, and he says, "Here's how we're going to reduce the deficit in half by 5 years." It requires pro-growth policies that grow our economy and fiscal sanity in the Halls of Congress.

Jobs/Education

Mr. Schieffer. Let's go to a new question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. And let's continue on jobs. You know, there are all kind of statistics out there, but I want to bring it down to an individual. Mr. President, what do you say to someone in this country who has lost his job to someone overseas who is being paid a fraction of what that job paid here in the United States?

President Bush. I say, Bob, "I've got policies to continue to grow our economy and create the jobs of the 21st century, and here's some help for you to go get an education. Here's some help for you to go to a community college. We've expanded trade adjustment assistance. We want to help pay for you to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century."

You know, there's a lot of talk about how to keep the economy growing, and we talk about fiscal matters. But perhaps the best way to keep jobs here in America and to keep this economy growing is to make sure our education system works.

I went to Washington to solve problems. And I saw a problem in the public education system in America. They were just shuffling too many kids through the system, year after year, grade after grade, without learning the basics. And so we said, "Let's raise the standards. We're spending more money, but let's raise the standards and measure early and solve problems now, before it's too late."

You know, education is how to help the person who has lost a job. Education is how to make sure this—we've got a workforce that's productive and competitive. You got—4 more years, I've got more to do to continue to raise standards, to continue to reward teachers and school districts that are working, to emphasize math and science in the classrooms, to continue to expand Pell grants, to make sure that people have an opportunity to start their career with a college diploma.

And so to the person you talked to, I say, "Here's some help. Here's some trade adjustment assistance money for you to go to a community college in your neighborhood, a community college which is providing the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century." And that's what we'd say to that person.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. I want you to notice how the President switched away from jobs and started talking about education principally. Let me come back in one moment to that, but I want to speak for a second, if I can, to what the President said about fiscal responsibility. Being lectured by the President on fiscal responsibility is a little bit like Tony Soprano talking to me about law and order in this country. [*Laughter*]

This President has taken a $5.6 trillion surplus and turned it into deficits as far as the eye can see. Health care costs for the average American have gone up 64 percent. Tuitions have gone up 35 percent, gasoline prices up 30 percent. Medicare premiums went up 17 percent a few days ago. Prescription drugs are up 12 percent a year. But guess what, America? The wages of Americans have gone down. The jobs that are being created in Arizona right now are paying about $13,700 less than the jobs that we're losing, and the President just walks on by this problem.

The fact is that he's cut job training money. A billion dollars was cut. They only added a little bit back this year because it's an election year. They've cut the Pell grants and the Perkins loans to help kids be able to go to college. They've cut the training money. They've wound up not even extending unemployment benefits and not even extending health care to those people who are unemployed. I'm going to do those things because that's what right in America: Help workers to transition in every respect.

Outsourcing Jobs

Mr. Schieffer. New question to you, Senator Kerry, 2 minutes, and it's still on jobs. You know, many experts say that a President really doesn't have much control over jobs. For example, if someone invents a machine that does the work of five people, that's progress. That's not the President's fault. So I ask you, is it fair to blame the administration entirely for this loss of jobs?

Senator Kerry. I don't blame them entirely for it. I blame the President for the things the President could do that has an impact on it. Outsourcing is going to happen. I've acknowledged that in union halls across the country. I've had shop stewards stand up and say, "Will you promise me you're going to stop all this outsourcing?" And I've looked them in the eye and I've said, "No, I can't do that."

What I can promise you is that I will make the playing field as fair as possible, that I will, for instance, make certain that with respect to the tax system, that you as a worker in America are not subsidizing the loss of

your job. Today, if you're an American business, you actually get a benefit for going overseas. You get to defer your taxes. So if you're looking at a competitive world, you say to yourself, "Hey, I do better overseas than I do here in America." That's not smart. I don't want American workers subsidizing the loss of their own job. And when I'm President, we're going to shut that loophole in a nanosecond, and we're going to use that money to lower corporate tax rates in America for all corporations 5 percent. And we're going to have a manufacturing jobs credit and a job hiring credit so we actually help people be able to hire here.

The second thing that we can do is provide a fair trade playing field. This President didn't stand up for Boeing when Airbus was violating international rules with subsidies. He discovered Boeing during the course of this campaign after I've been talking about it for months. The fact is that the President had an opportunity to stand up and take on China for currency manipulation. There are companies that wanted to petition the administration. They were told, "Don't even bother. We're not going to listen to it."

The fact is that there have been markets shut to us that we haven't stood up and fought for. I'm going to fight for a fair trade playing field for the American worker. And I will fight for the American worker just as hard as I fight for my own job. That's what the American worker wants. And if we do that, we can have an impact. Plus, we need fiscal discipline. Restore fiscal discipline, we'll do a lot better.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. Whoo! Let me start with the Pell grants. In his last litany of misstatements, he said we cut Pell grants. We've increased Pell grants by a million students. That's a fact.

Here he talks to the workers; let me talk to the workers. You got more money in your pocket as a result of the tax relief we passed and he opposed. If you have a child, you got a $1,000 child credit. That's money in your pocket. If you're married, we reduced the marriage penalty. The code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. We created a 10-percent bracket to help lower income Americans. A family of four making 40,000 received about $1,700 in tax relief. It's your money. The way my opponent talks, he said we're going to spend the Government's money. No, we're spending your money. And when you have more money in your pocket, you're able to better afford things you want. I believe the role of Government is to stand side by side with our citizens to help them realize their dreams, not tell citizens how to live their lives.

My opponent talks about fiscal sanity. His record in the United States Senate does not match his rhetoric. He voted to increase taxes 98 times and to bust the budget 277 times.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Bob, anybody can play with these votes; everybody knows that. I have supported or voted for tax cuts over 600 times. I broke with my party in order to balance the budget, and Ronald Reagan signed into law the tax cut that we voted for. I voted for IRA tax cuts. I voted for small-business tax cuts.

But you know why the Pell grants have gone up in their numbers? Because more people qualified for them, because they don't have money. But they're not getting the $5,100 the President promised them. They're getting less money. There are more people who qualify. That's not what we want.

President Bush. Senator, no one is playing with your votes. You voted to increase taxes 98 times. When they voted—when they proposed reducing taxes, you voted against it 126 times. You voted to violate the budget caps 277 times. You know, there's a mainstream in American politics. You sit right on the far left bank. As a matter of fact, your record is such that Ted Kennedy, your colleague, is the conservative Senator from Massachusetts.

Same-Sex Marriage

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, let's get back to economic issues. But let's shift to some other questions here. Both of you are opposed to gay marriage. But to understand how you have come to that conclusion, I want to ask you a more basic question. Do you believe homosexuality is a choice?

President Bush. You know, Bob, I don't know. I just don't know. I do know that we have a choice to make in America, and that

is to treat people with tolerance and respect and dignity. It's important that we do that. I also know, in a free society, people, consenting adults, can live the way they want to live. And that's to be honored.

But as we respect someone's rights and as we profess tolerance, we shouldn't change—or have to change our basic views on the sanctity of marriage. I believe in the sanctity of marriage. I think it's very important that we protect marriage as an institution between a man and a woman.

I proposed a constitutional amendment. The reason I did so was because I was worried that activist judges are actually defining the definition of marriage. And the surest way to protect marriage between a man and woman is to amend the Constitution. It has also the benefit of allowing citizens to participate in the process. After all, when you amend the Constitution, State legislatures must participate in the ratification of the Constitution.

I'm deeply concerned that judges are making those decisions and not the citizenry of the United States. You know, Congress passed a law called DOMA, the Defense of Marriage Act. My opponent was against it. It basically protected States from the action of one State to another. It also defined marriage as between a man and a woman. But I'm concerned that that will get overturned, and if it gets overturned, then we'll end up with marriage being defined by courts. And I don't think that's in our Nation's interest.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. We're all God's children, Bob, and I think if you were to talk to Dick Cheney's daughter, who is a lesbian, she would tell you that she's being who she was. She's being who she was born as. I think if you talk to anybody, it's not choice. I've met people who've struggled with this for years, people who were in a marriage because they were living a sort of convention, and they struggled with it. And I've met wives who are supportive of their husbands, or vice versa, when they finally sort of broke out and allowed themselves to live who they were, who they felt God had made them. I think we have to respect that.

The President and I share the belief that marriage is between a man and a woman. I believe that. I believe marriage is between a man and a woman. But I also believe that because we are the United States of America, we're a country with a great, unbelievable Constitution, with rights that we afford people, that you can't discriminate in the workplace. You can't discriminate in the rights that you afford people. You can't disallow someone the right to visit their partner in a hospital. You have to allow people to transfer property, which is why I'm for partnership rights and so forth.

Now, with respect to DOMA and the marriage laws, the States have always been able to manage those laws, and they're proving today, every State, that they can manage them adequately.

Abortion

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry, a new question for you. The New York Times reports that some Catholic archbishops are telling their church members that it would be a sin to vote for a candidate like you because you support a woman's right to choose an abortion and unlimited stem cell research. What is your reaction to that?

Senator Kerry. I respect their views. I completely respect their views. I am a Catholic, and I grew up learning how to respect those views. But I disagree with them, as do many. I believe that I can't legislate or transfer to another American citizen my article of faith. What is an article of faith for me is not something that I can legislate on somebody who doesn't share that article of faith. I believe that choice is a woman's choice. It's between a woman, God, and her doctor, and that's why I support that.

Now, I will not allow somebody to come in and change *Roe* v. *Wade*. The President has never said whether or not he would do that, but we know from the people he's tried to appoint to the court, he wants to. I will not. I will defend the right of *Roe* v. *Wade*.

Now, with respect to religion, you know, as I said, I grew up a Catholic. I was an altar boy. I know that throughout my life, this has made a difference to me. And as President Kennedy said when he ran for President, he said, "I'm not running to be a Catholic President. I'm running to be a President who happens to be Catholic."

Now, my faith affects everything that I do and choose. There's a great passage of the Bible that says, "What does it mean, my brother, to say you have faith, if there are no deeds? Faith without works is dead." And I think that everything you do in public life has to be guided by your faith, affected by your faith, but without transferring it in any official way to other people. That's why I fight against poverty. That's why I fight to clean up the environment and protect this Earth. That's why I fight for equality and justice. All of those things come out of that fundamental teaching and belief of faith.

But I know this, that President Kennedy, in his Inaugural Address, told all of us that, "Here on Earth, God's work must truly be our own." And that's what we have to—so I think that's the test of public service.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. I think it's important to promote a culture of life. I think a hospitable society is a society where every being counts and every person matters. I believe the ideal world is one in which every child is protected in law and welcomed to life. I understand there's great differences on this issue of abortion, but I believe reasonable people can come together and put good law in place that will help reduce the number of abortions.

Take, for example, the ban on partial-birth abortion. It's a brutal practice. People from both political parties came together in the Halls of Congress and voted overwhelmingly to ban that practice. It made a lot of sense. My opponent, in that he's out of the mainstream, voted against that law.

What I'm saying is, is that as we promote life and promote a culture of life, surely there are ways we can work together to reduce the number of abortions: Continue to promote adoption laws—that's a great alternative to abortion; continue to fund and promote maternity group homes. I will continue to promote abstinence programs. At the last debate, my opponent said his wife was involved with those programs. That's great, and I appreciate that very much. All of us ought to be involved with programs that provide a viable alternative to abortion.

Health Care Costs

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, let's have a new question. It goes to you, and let's get back to economic issues. Health insurance costs have risen over 36 percent over the last 4 years, according to the Washington Post. We're paying more; we're getting less. I would like to ask you, who bears responsibility for this? Is it the Government? Is it the insurance companies? Is it the lawyers? Is it the doctors? Is it the administration?

President Bush. Gosh, I sure hope it's not the administration. [*Laughter*] No, there is a—look, there's a systemic problem. Health care costs are on the rise because the consumers are not involved in the decisionmaking process. Most health care costs are covered by third parties, and therefore, the actual user of health care is not the purchaser of health care. And there's no market forces involved with health care. It's one of the reasons I'm a strong believer in what they call health savings accounts. These are accounts that allow somebody to buy a low-premium, high-deductible catastrophic plan and couple it with tax-free savings. Businesses can contribute; employees can contribute on a contractual basis. But this is a way to make sure people are actually involved with the decisionmaking process on health care.

Secondly, I do believe the lawsuits—I don't believe, I know—that the lawsuits are causing health care costs to rise in America. That's why I'm such a strong believer in medical liability reform. At the last debate, my opponent said, "Well, they only—these lawsuits only cause costs to go up by one percent." Well, he didn't include the defensive practice of medicine that costs the Federal Government some $28 billion a year and costs our society between 60 and 100 billion dollars a year.

Thirdly, one of the reasons why there's still high costs in medicine is because this is the—they don't use information technology. It's like if you looked at the—it's the equivalent of the buggy-and-horse days compared to other industries here in America. And so we've got to introduce high technology into health care. We're beginning to do it. We're changing the language. We want there to be electronic medical records to cut down on error as well as to reduce costs. People tell

me that when the health care field is fully integrated with information technology, it will wring some 20 percent of the costs out of the system.

And finally, moving generic drugs to the market quicker. So, those are four ways to help control the costs in health care.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. The reason health care costs are getting higher—one of the principal reasons is that this administration has stood in the way of commonsense efforts that would have reduced the costs. Let me give you a prime example. In the Senate, we passed the right of Americans to import drugs from Canada. But the President and his friends took it out in the House, and now you don't have that right. The President blocked you from the right to have less expensive drugs from Canada.

We also wanted Medicare to be able to negotiate bulk purchasing. The VA does that. The VA provides lower cost drugs to our veterans. We could have done that in Medicare. Medicare is paid for by the American taxpayer. Medicare belongs to you. Medicare is for seniors who are—many of them—on fixed income, to lift them out of poverty. But rather than help you, the taxpayer, have lower cost, rather than help seniors have less expensive drugs, the President made it illegal—illegal—for Medicare to actually go out and bargain for lower prices. Result: $139 billion windfall profit to the drug companies coming out of your pockets. That's a large part of your 17 percent increase in Medicare premiums. When I'm President, I'm sending that back to Congress, and we're going to get a real prescription drug benefit.

Now, we also have people sicker because they don't have health insurance. So whether it's diabetes or cancer, they come to the hospitals later, and it costs America more. We've got to have health care for all Americans.

Mr. Schieffer. Go ahead, Mr. President.

President Bush. I think it's important, since he talked about the Medicare plan—he's been in the United States Senate for 20 years. He has no record on reforming of health care, no record at all. He introduced some 300 bills, and he's passed 5—no record of leadership.

I came to Washington to solve problems. I was deeply concerned about seniors having to choose between prescription drugs and food, and so I led. And in 2006, our seniors will get a prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Once again, the President is misleading America. I've actually passed 56 individual bills that I've personally written. And in addition to that, they're not always under my name; there is amendments on certain bills.

But more importantly, with respect to the question of "no record," I helped write—I did write—I was one of the original authors of the early childhood health care and the expansion of health care that we did in the middle of the 1990s. And I'm very proud of that. So the President's wrong.

Senator's Health Care Plan

Mr. Schieffer. Let me direct the next question to you, Senator Kerry, and again, let's stay on health care. You have, as you have proposed and as the President has commented on tonight, proposed a massive plan to extend health care coverage to children. You're also talking about the Government picking up a big part of the catastrophic bills that people get at the hospital. And you have said that you can pay for this by rolling back the President's tax cut on the upper two percent.

Senator Kerry. That's correct.

Mr. Schieffer. You heard the President say earlier tonight that it's going to cost a whole lot more money than that. I just ask you, where are you going to get the money?

Senator Kerry. Well, two leading national news networks have both said the President's characterization of my health care plan is incorrect. One called it fiction. The other called it untrue. The fact is that my health care plan, America, is very simple. It gives you the choice. I don't force you to do anything. It's not a Government plan. The Government doesn't require you to do anything. You choose your doctor. You choose your plan. If you don't want to take the offer of the plan that I want to put forward, you don't have to. You can keep what you have today, keep a high deductible, keep high premiums,

keep a high co-pay, keep low benefits. But I got a better plan, and I don't think a lot of people are going to want to keep what they have today.

Here's what I do. We take over Medicaid children from the States so that every child in America is covered. And in exchange, if the States want to—they're not forced to; they can choose to—they cover individuals up to 300 percent of poverty. It's their choice. I think they'll choose it, because it's a net plus of $5 billion to them.

We allow you—if you choose to; you don't have to—but we give you broader competition to allow you to buy into the same health care plan that Senators and Congressmen give themselves. If it's good enough for us, it's good enough for every American. I believe that your health care is just as important as any politician in Washington, DC. If you want to buy into it, you can. We give you broader competition. That helps lower prices.

In addition to that, we're going to allow people 55 to 64 to buy into Medicare early. And most importantly, we give small business a 50-percent tax credit so that after we lower the cost of health care, they also get, whether they're self-employed or a small business, a lower cost to be able to cover their employees.

Now, what happens is, when you begin to get people covered like that—for instance, in diabetes, if you diagnose diabetes early, you could save $50 billion in the health care system of America by avoiding surgery and dialysis. It works, and I'm going to offer it to America.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. In all due respect, I'm not so sure it's credible to quote leading news organizations about—well, never mind. Anyway—[*laughter*]—let me quote the Lewin report. The Lewin report is a group of folks who are not politically affiliated. They analyzed the Senator's plan. It costs $1.2 trillion. The Lewin report accurately noted that there are going to be 20 million people—over 20 million people added to Government-controlled health care. It will be the largest increase in Government health care ever.

If you raise the Medicaid to 300 percent, it provides an incentive for small businesses not to provide private insurance to their employees. Why should they insure somebody when the Government is going to insure for them? It's estimated that 8 million people will go from private insurance to Government insurance.

We have a fundamental difference of opinion. I think Government-run health will lead to poor quality health, will lead to rationing, will lead to less choice. Once a health care program ends up in a line item in the Federal Government budget, it leads to more controls. And just look at other countries that have tried to have federally controlled health care. They have poor quality health care. Our health care system is the envy of the world because we believe in making sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in the Nation's Capital.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator.

Senator Kerry. The President just said that Government-run health care results in poor quality. Now, maybe that explains why he hasn't fully funded the VA, and the VA hospital is having trouble, and veterans are complaining. Maybe that explains why Medicare patients are complaining about being pushed off of Medicare—he doesn't adequately fund it.

But let me just say to America, I am not proposing a Government-run program. That's not what I have. I have Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Senators and Congressmen have a wide choice. Americans ought to have it too.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. You talk about the VA. We've increased VA funding by 22 billion in the 4 years since I've been President. That's twice the amount that my predecessor increased VA funding. Of course, we're meeting our obligation to our veterans, and the veterans know that. We're expanding veterans' health care throughout the country. We're aligning facilities where the veterans live now. Veterans are getting very good health care under my administration, and they will continue to do so during the next 4 years.

Social Security

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, the next question is to you. We all know that Social

Security is running out of money, and it has to be fixed. You have proposed to fix it by letting people put some of the money collected to pay benefits into private savings accounts. But the critics are saying that's going to mean finding a trillion dollars over the next 10 years to continue paying benefits as those accounts are being set up. So where do you get the money? Are you going to have to increase the deficit by that much over 10 years?

President Bush. Bob, first let me make sure that every senior listening today understands that when we're talking about reforming Social Security, that they'll still get their checks. I remember the 2000 campaign; people said, "If George W. gets elected, your check will be taken away." Well, people got their checks, and they will continue to get their checks.

There is a problem for our youngsters, a real problem, and if we don't act today, the problem will be valued in the trillions. And so I think we need to think differently. We'll honor our commitment to our seniors, but for young—for our children and our grandchildren, we need to have a different strategy. In recognizing that, I called together a group of our fellow citizens to study the issue. It was a committee chaired by the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, a Democrat. And they came up with a variety of ideas for people to look at.

I believe that younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and put it in a personal savings account, because I understand that they need to get better rates of return than the rates of return being given in the current Social Security trust. And the compounding rate of interest effect will make it more likely that the Social Security system is solvent for our children and our grandchildren.

I will work with Republicans and Democrats. This will be a vital issue in my second term. It is an issue that I'm willing to take on. And so I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together, and we're of course going to have to consider the costs. But I want to warn my fellow citizens the cost of doing nothing, the cost of saying the current system is okay, far exceeds the cost of trying to make sure we save the system for our children.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. You just heard the President say that young people ought to be able to take money out of Social Security and put it in their own accounts. Now, my fellow Americans, that's an invitation to disaster. The CBO said very clearly that if you were to adopt the President's plan, there will be a $2 trillion hole in Social Security, because today's workers pay into the system for today's retirees. And the CBO said—that's the Congressional Budget Office; it's bipartisan—they said that there would have to be a cut in benefits of 25 to 40 percent.

Now, the President has never explained to America—ever; hasn't done it tonight—where does the transitional money, that $2 trillion, come from? He's already got $3 trillion, according to the Washington Post, of expenses that he's put on the line from his convention and the promises of this campaign, none of which are paid for—not one of them are paid for.

The fact is that the President is driving the largest deficits in American history. He's broken the pay-as-you-go rules. I have a record of fighting for fiscal responsibility. In 1985, I was one of the first Democrats—broke with my party—we balanced the budget in the nineties. We paid down the debt for 2 years. And that's what we're going to do. We're going to protect Social Security. I will not privatize it. I will not cut the benefits. And we're going to be fiscally responsible, and we will take care of Social Security.

Mr. Schieffer. Let me just stay on Social Security with a new question for Senator Kerry, because Senator Kerry, you have just said you will not cut benefits. Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, says there's no way that Social Security can pay retirees what we have promised them unless we recalibrate. What he's suggesting, we're going to have to cut benefits or we're going to have to raise retirement age; we may have to take some other reform. But if you've just said you've promised no changes, does that mean you're just going to leave this as a problem, another problem, for our children to solve?

Senator Kerry. Not at all. Absolutely not, Bob. This is the same thing we heard—I remember I appeared on "Meet the Press" with Tim Russert in 1990-something—we

heard the same thing. We fixed it. In fact, we put together a $5.6 trillion surplus in the nineties that was for the purpose of saving Social Security. If you take the tax cut that the President of the United States has given—President Bush gave to Americans in the top 1 percent of America, just that tax cut that went to the top 1 percent of America would have saved Social Security until the year 2075. The President decided to give it to the wealthiest Americans in a tax cut.

Now, Alan Greenspan, who I think has done a terrific job in monetary policy, supports the President's tax cut. I don't. I support it for the middle class, not that part of it that goes to people earning more than $200,000 a year. And when I roll it back and we invest in the things that I've talked about to move our economy, we're going to grow sufficiently that we begin to cut the deficit in half, and we get back to where we were at the end of the 1990s when we balanced the budget and paid down the debt of this country. Now, we can do that.

Now, if later on, after a period of time, we find that Social Security is in trouble, then we'll pull together the top experts of the country. We'll do exactly what we did in the 1990s, and we'll make whatever adjustment is necessary. But the first and most important thing is to start creating jobs in America. The jobs the President is creating pay $9,000 less than the jobs that we're losing. And this is the first President in 72 years to preside over an economy in America that has lost jobs—1.6 million jobs. Eleven other Presidents—six Democrats and five Republicans—had wars, had recessions, had great difficulties. None of them lost jobs the way this President has.

I have a plan to put America back to work. And if we're fiscally responsible and put America back to work, we're going to fix Social Security.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. He forgot to tell you he voted to tax Social Security benefits more than one time. I didn't hear any plan to fix Social Security. I heard more of the same. He talks about middle-class tax cuts; that's exactly where the tax cuts went. Most of the tax cuts went to low- and middle-income Americans. And now the Tax Code is more fair; 20 percent of the upper income people pay about 80 percent of the taxes in America today because of how we structured the tax cuts. People listening out there know the benefits of the tax cuts we passed. If you have a child, you got tax relief. If you're married, you got tax relief. If you pay any tax at all, you got tax relief, all of which was opposed by my opponent. And the tax relief was important to spur consumption and investment to get us out of this recession.

People need to remember, 6 months prior to my arrival, the stock market started to go down, and it was one of the largest declines in our history. And then we had a recession, and we got attacked, which cost us one million jobs. But we acted. I led the Congress. We passed tax relief. And now this economy is growing. We added 1.9 million new jobs over the last 13 months.

Sure, there's more work to do. But the way to make sure our economy grows is not to raise taxes on small-business owners. It's not to increase the scope of the Federal Government. It's to make sure we have fiscal sanity and keep taxes low.

Immigration/Border Security

Mr. Schieffer. Let's go to a new question, Mr. President. I got more e-mail this week on this question than any other question, and it is about immigration. I'm told that at least 8,000 people cross our borders illegally every day. Some people believe this is a security issue, as you know. Some believe it's an economic issue. Some see it as a human rights issue. How do you see it, and what do we need to do about it?

President Bush. I see it as a serious problem. I see it as a security issue; I see it as an economic issue; and I see it as a human rights issue. We're increasing the border security of the United States. We've got 1,000 more Border Patrol agents on the southern border. We're using new equipment. We're using unmanned vehicles to spot people coming across, and we'll continue to do so over the next 4 years. This is a subject I'm very familiar with. After all, I was a border Governor for a while.

Many people are coming to this country for economic reasons. They're coming here to work. If you can make 50 cents in the

heart of Mexico, for example, or make $5 here in America—5.15—you're going to come here if you're worth your salt, if you want to put food on the table for your families. And that's what's happening.

And so, in order to take pressure off the border, in order to make the borders more secure, I believe there ought to be a temporary-worker card that allows a willing worker and a willing employer to mate up—so long as there's not an American willing to do the job—to join up in order to be able to fulfill the employer's needs. That has the benefit of making sure our employers aren't breaking the law as they try to fill their workforce needs. It makes sure that the people coming across the border are humanely treated, that they're not kept in the shadows of our society, that they're able to go back and forth to see their families. See, the card will have a period of time attached to it.

It also means it takes pressure off the border. If somebody is coming here to work with a card, it means they're not going to have to sneak across the border. It means our Border Patrol will be more likely to be able to focus on doing their job.

Now, it's very important for our citizens to also know that I don't believe we ought to have amnesty. I don't think we ought to reward illegal behavior. There are plenty of people standing in line to become a citizen, and we ought not to crowd these people ahead of them in line. If they want to become a citizen, they can stand in line too. And here's where my opponent and I differ. In September 2003, he supported amnesty for illegal aliens.

Mr. Schieffer. Time's up.

Senator.

Senator Kerry. Let me just answer one part of that last question quickly, and then I'll come to immigration. The American middle-class family isn't making it right now, Bob, and what the President said about the tax cuts have been wiped out by the increase in health care, the increase in gasoline, the increase in tuitions, the increase in prescription drugs. The fact is the take-home pay of a typical American family as a share of national income is lower than it's been since 1929. And the take-home pay of the richest 1 percent of Americans is the highest it's been since 1928. Under President Bush, the middle class has seen their tax burden go up, and the wealthiest tax burden has gone down. Now, that's wrong.

Now, with respect to immigration reform, the President broke his promise on immigration reform. He said he would reform it. Four years later, he's now promising another plan. Here's what I'll do. Number one, the borders are more leaking today than they were before 9/11. The fact is we haven't done what we need to do to toughen up our borders, and I will.

Secondly, we need a guest-worker program, but if it's all we have, it's not going to solve the problem. The second thing we need is to crack down on illegal hiring. It's against the law in the United States to hire people illegally, and we ought to be enforcing that law properly.

And thirdly, we need an earned legalization program for people who've been here for a long time, stayed out of trouble, got a job, paid their taxes, and their kids are American. We've got to start moving them toward full citizenship, out of the shadows.

Mr. Schieffer. Do you want to respond, Mr. President?

President Bush. Well, to say that the borders are not as protected as they were prior to September the 11th shows he doesn't know the borders. They're much better protected today than they were when I was the Governor of Texas. We've got much more manpower, much more equipment there. He just doesn't understand how the borders work, evidently, to say that. That is an outrageous claim. And we'll continue to protect our borders. We'll continue to increase manpower and equipment.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator.

Senator Kerry. Four thousand people a day are coming across the border. The fact is that we now have people from the Middle East—allegedly—coming across the border. And we're not doing what we ought to do in terms of the technology. We have iris identification technology. We have thumbprint, fingerprint technology today. We can know who the people are, that they're really the people they say they are, when they cross the border. We could speed it up. There are huge delays. The fact is, our borders are not

as secure as they ought to be, and I'll make them secure.

Minimum Wage/Education/Jobs

Mr. Schieffer. Next question to you, Senator Kerry. The gap between rich and poor is growing wider. More people are dropping into poverty. Yet the minimum wage has been stuck at, what, $5.15 an hour now for about 7 years. Is it time to raise it?

Senator Kerry. Well, I'm glad you raised that question. It's long-overdue time to raise the minimum wage. And America, this is one of those issues that separates the President and myself. We have fought to try to raise the minimum wage in the last years. But the Republican leadership of the House and Senate won't even let us have a vote on it. We're not allowed to vote on it. They don't want to raise the minimum wage.

The minimum wage is the lowest minimum wage value it has been in our Nation in 50 years. If we raise the minimum wage, which I will do over several years to $7 an hour, 9.2 million women who are trying to raise their families would earn another $3,800 a year. The President has denied 9.2 million women $3,800 a year, but he doesn't hesitate to fight for $136,000 to a millionaire. One percent of America got $89 billion last year in a tax cut. But people working hard, playing by the rules, trying to take care of their kids—family values that we're supposed to value so much in America—I'm tired of politicians who talk about family values and don't value families. What we need to do is raise the minimum wage.

We also need to hold onto equal pay. Women work for 76 cents on the dollar for the same work that men do. That's not right in America. And we have an initiative that we were working on to raise women's pay. They've cut it off. They've stopped it. They don't enforce these kinds of things. I think that it is a matter of fundamental right that if we raise the minimum wage, 15 million Americans would be positively affected. We'd put money into the hands of people who work hard, who obey the rules, who play for the American Dream. And if we did that, we'd have more consumption ability in America, which is what we need right now in order to kick our economy into gear. I will fight tooth and nail to pass the minimum wage.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. Actually, Mitch McConnell had a minimum wage plan that I supported that would have increased the minimum wage.

But let me talk about what's really important for the worker you're referring to, and that's to make sure the education system works, is to make sure we raise standards. Listen, the No Child Left Behind Act is really a jobs act when you think about it. The No Child Left Behind Act says, "We'll raise standards. We'll increase Federal spending, but in return for extra spending, we now want people to measure—States and local jurisdictions to measure, to show us whether or not a child can read or write or add and subtract." You cannot solve a problem unless you diagnose the problem, and we weren't diagnosing problems. And therefore, just kids were being shuffled through the school. And guess who would get shuffled through? Children whose parents wouldn't speak English as first language, just moved through; many inner-city kids, just moved through. We've stopped that practice now by measuring early, and when we find a problem, we spend extra money to correct it.

I remember a lady in Houston, Texas, telling me reading is the new civil right. And she's right. In order to make sure people have jobs for the 21st century, we've got to get it right in the education system. And we're beginning to close a minority achievement gap now. You see, we'd never be able to compete in the 21st century unless we have an education system that doesn't quit on children, an education system that raises standards, an education that makes sure there's excellence in every classroom.

Judicial Nominations/Education Funding

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, I want to go back to something Senator Kerry said earlier tonight and ask a followup of my own. He said—and this will be a new question to you—he said that you had never said whether you would like to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*. So I'd ask you directly, would you like to?

President Bush. What he's asking me is will I have a litmus test for my judges, and

the answer is no, I will not have a litmus test. I will pick judges who will interpret the Constitution, but I'll have no litmus test.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry, you'd like to respond?

Senator Kerry. Is that a new question, or a 30-second question?

Mr. Schieffer. That's a new question for President Bush.

Senator Kerry. Which time limit are we——

Mr. Schieffer. You have 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Thank you very much. Well, again, the President didn't answer the question. I will answer it straight to America. I'm not going to appoint a judge to the court who is going to undo a constitutional right, whether it's the first amendment or the fifth amendment or some other right that's given under our courts today—under the Constitution. And I believe that the right of choice is a constitutional right. So, I don't intend to see it undone. Clearly, the President wants to leave an ambivalence or intends to undo it.

Let me go a step further. We have a long distance yet to travel in terms of fairness in America. I don't know how you can govern in this country when you look at New York City and you see that 50 percent of the black males there are unemployed, when you see 40 percent of Hispanic children, of black children in some cities dropping out of high school. And yet the President, who talks about No Child Left Behind, refused to fully fund—by $28 billion—that particular program, so you can make a difference in the lives of those young people.

Now, right here in Arizona, that difference would have been $131 million to the State of Arizona to help its kids be able to have better education and to lift the property tax burden from its citizens. The President reneged on his promise to fund No Child Left Behind. He will tell you he's raised the money, and he has, but he didn't put in what he promised. And that makes a difference in the lives of our children.

Mr. Schieffer. Yes, sir.

President Bush. Two things: One, he clearly has a litmus test for his judges, which I disagree with.

And secondly, only a liberal Senator from Massachusetts would say that a 49-percent increase in funding for education was not enough. We've increased funds, but more importantly, we've reformed the system to make sure that we solve problems early, before they're too late. He talked about the unemployed. Absolutely, we've got to make sure they get educated. He talked about children whose parents don't speak English as a first language. Absolutely, we've got to make sure they get educated. And that's what the No Child Left Behind Act does.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator.

Senator Kerry. You don't measure it by a percentage increase. Mr. President, you measure it by whether you're getting the job done. Five hundred thousand kids lost after-school programs because of your budget. Now, that's not in my gut. That's not my value system—and certainly not so that the wealthiest people in America can walk away with another tax cut: $89 billion last year to the top 1 percent of Americans, but kids lost their after-school programs. You be the judge.

Addressing the Needs of the Military

Mr. Schieffer. All right, let's go to another question, and it is to Senator Kerry. You have 2 minutes, sir. Senator, at the last debate, President Bush said he did not favor a draft. You agreed with him. But our National Guard and Reserve forces are being severely strained because many of them are being held beyond their enlistments. Some of them say that it's a backdoor draft. Is there any relief that could be offered to these brave Americans and their families? If you became President, Senator Kerry, what would you do about this situation of holding National Guard and Reservists for these extended periods of time and these repeated callups that they're now facing?

Senator Kerry. Well, I think the fact that they're facing these repeated callups, some of them two and three deployments, and there's a stop-loss policy that prevents people from being able to get out when their time was up, is a reflection of the bad judgment this President exercised in how he has engaged in the world and deployed our forces. Our military is overextended. Nine out of ten

Active Duty Army divisions are either in Iraq, going to Iraq, or have come back from Iraq. One way or the other, they're wrapped up in it.

Now, I've proposed adding two active-duty divisions to the Armed Forces of the United States, one combat, one support. In addition, I'm going to double the number of special forces so that we can fight a more effective war on terror with less pressure on the National Guard and Reserve. And what I would like to do is see the National Guard and Reserve be deployed differently here in our own country. There's much we can do with them with respect to homeland security. We ought to be doing that, and that would relieve an enormous amount of pressure.

But the most important thing to relieve the pressure on all of our Armed Forces is, frankly, to run a foreign policy that recognizes that America is strongest when we are working with real alliances, when we are sharing the burdens of the world by working through our statesmanship at the highest levels and our diplomacy to bring other nations to our side.

I've said it before; I say it again: I believe the President broke faith with the American people in the way that he took this Nation to war. He said he would work through the—a real alliance. He said in Cincinnati, "We would plan carefully. We would take every precaution." Well, we didn't, and the result is our forces today are overextended. The fact is that he did not choose to go to war as a last resort. And America now is paying already 120 billion, up to 200 billion before we're finished and much more, probably, and that is the result of this President taking his eye off of Usama bin Laden.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. The best way to take the pressure off our troops is to succeed in Iraq, is to train Iraqis so they can do the hard work of democracy, is to give them a chance to defend their country, which is precisely what we're doing. We'll have 125,000 troops trained by the end of this year.

I remember going on an airplane in Bangor, Maine, to say thanks to the Reservists and Guard that were headed overseas from Tennessee and North Carolina and Georgia. Some of them had been there before. The people I talked to, the spirits were high. They didn't view their service as a backdoor draft. They view their service as an opportunity to serve their country.

My opponent, the Senator, talks about foreign policy. In our first debate, he proposed America pass a "global test." In order to defend ourselves, we have to get international approval. That's one of the major differences we have about defending our country. I work with allies. I work with friends. We'll continue to build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries. We'll be resolute. We'll be strong, and we will wage a comprehensive war against the terrorists.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator.

Senator Kerry. I have never suggested a test where we turn over our security to any nation. In fact, I've said the opposite. I will never turn the security of the United States over to any nation. No nation will ever have a veto over us. But I think it makes sense—I think most Americans in their guts know that we ought to pass a sort of truth standard. That's how you gain legitimacy with your own countrypeople, and that's how you gain legitimacy in the world. But I will never fail to protect the United States of America.

President Bush. In 1990, there was a vast coalition put together to run Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. The international community, the international world, said this is the right thing to do. But when it came time to authorize the use of force on the Senate floor, my opponent voted against the use of force. Apparently, you can't pass any test under his vision of the world.

Assault Weapons Ban

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, new question, 2 minutes. You said that if Congress would vote to extend the ban on assault weapons, that you'd sign the legislation. But you did nothing to encourage the Congress to extend it. Why not?

President Bush. Actually, I made my intentions—I made my views clear. I did think we ought to extend the assault weapons ban and was told the fact that the bill was never going to move because Republicans and Democrats were against the assault weapon ban, people of both parties.

Now, I believe law-abiding citizens ought to be able to own a gun. I believe in background checks at gun shows or anywhere to make sure that guns don't get in the hands of people that shouldn't have them. But the best way to protect our citizens from guns is to prosecute those who commit crimes with guns. And that's why, early in my administration, I called the Attorney General and the U.S. attorneys and said, "Put together a task force all around the country to prosecute those who commit crime with guns." And the prosecutions are up by about 68 percent, I believe is the number. Neighborhoods are safer when we crack down on people who commit crimes with guns. To me, that's the best way to secure America.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator.

Senator Kerry. I believe it was a failure of Presidential leadership not to reauthorize the assault weapons ban. I am a hunter. I'm a gun owner. I've been a hunter since I was a kid, 12, 13 years old. And I respect the second amendment, and I will not tamper with the second amendment. But I'll tell you this. I'm also a former law enforcement officer. I ran one of the largest district attorney offices in America, one of the 10 largest. I've put people behind bars for the rest of their life. I've broken up organized crime. I know something about prosecuting. And most of the law enforcement agencies in America wanted that assault weapons ban. They don't want to go into a drug bust and be facing an AK–47.

I was hunting in Iowa last year with the sheriff from one of the counties there, and he pointed to a house in back of us and said, "See that house over there? We just did a drug bust a week earlier, and the guy we arrested had an AK–47 lying on the bed right beside him."

Because of the President's decision today, law enforcement officers will walk into a place that will be more dangerous. Terrorists can now come into America and go to a gun show and, without even a background check, buy an assault weapon today. And that's what Usama bin Laden's handbook said, because we captured it in Afghanistan, and it encouraged them to do it.

So I believe America is less safe. If Tom DeLay or someone in the House said to me, "Sorry, we don't have the votes," I'd have said, "Then we're going to have a fight." And I'd have taken it out to the country, and I'd have had every law enforcement officer in the country visit those Congressmen. We'd have won what Bill Clinton won.

Affirmative Action

Mr. Schieffer. Let's go to a new question. For you, Senator Kerry, 2 minutes. Affirmative action—do you see a need for affirmative action programs, or have we moved far enough along that we no longer need to use race and gender as a factor in school admissions and Federal and State contracts, and so on?

Senator Kerry. No, Bob, regrettably, we have not moved far enough along. And I regret to say that this administration has even blocked steps that could help us move further along. I'll give you an example.

I'm the—I served on the Small Business Committee for a long time. I was chairman of it once; now I'm the senior Democrat on it. We used to—we have a goal there for minority set-aside programs to try to encourage ownership in the country. They don't reach those goals. They don't even fight to reach those goals. They've tried to undo them.

The fact is that in too many parts of our country, we still have discrimination, and affirmative action is not just something that applies to people of color. Some people have a mistaken view of it in America. It also is with respect to women. It's with respect to other efforts to try to reach out and be inclusive in our country. I think that we have a long way to go, regrettably. If you look at what's happened, we've made progress; I want to say that at the same time.

During the Clinton years, as you may recall, there was a fight over affirmative action. And there were many people, like myself, who opposed quotas, who felt there were places where it was overreaching. So we had a policy called "mend it, don't end it." We fixed it. And we fixed it for a reason, because there are too many people still in this country who feel the stark resistance of racism. And so we have a distance to travel. As President, I will make certain we travel it.

Now, let me just share something. This President is the first President ever, I think,

not to meet with the NAACP. This is a President who hasn't met with the Black Congressional Caucus. This is a President who has not met with the civil rights leadership of our country. If a President doesn't reach out and bring people in and be inclusive, then how are we going to get over those barriers? I see that as part of my job as President, and I'll make my best effort to do it.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. Well, first of all, it is just not true that I haven't met with the Black Congressional Caucus. I met with the Black Congressional Caucus at the White House.

And secondly, like my opponent, I don't agree we ought to have quotas—I agree, we shouldn't have quotas. But we ought to have an aggressive effort to make sure people are educated, to make sure when they get out of high school there's Pell grants available for them, which is what we've done. We've expanded Pell grants by a million students. Do you realize, today in America, we spend $73 billion to help 10 million low- and middle-income families better afford college? That's the access I believe is necessary, is to make sure every child learns to read, write, add, and subtract early, to be able to build on that education by going to college so they can start their careers with a college diploma.

I believe the best way to help our small businesses is not only through small-business loans, which we have increased since I've been the President of the United States, but to unbundle Government contracts so people will have a chance to be able to bid and receive a contract to help get their business going.

Minority ownership of businesses are up because we created an environment for the entrepreneurial spirit to be strong. I think—I believe part of a hopeful society is one in which somebody owns something. Today in America more minorities own a home than ever before. And that's hopeful, and that's positive.

Candidates' Faith

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President, let's go to a new question. You were asked before the invasion—or after the invasion of Iraq if you had checked with your dad. And I believe—I don't remember the quote exactly—but I believe you said you had checked with a higher authority. I would like to ask you, what part does your faith play on your policy decisions?

President Bush. First, my faith plays a lot—a big part in my life. And that's—when I was answering that question, what I was really saying to the person was that I pray a lot, and I do. And my faith is a very—it's very personal. I pray for strength. I pray for wisdom. I pray for our troops in harm's way. I pray for my family. I pray for my little girls. But I'm mindful, in a free society, that people can worship if they want to or not. You're equally an American if you choose to worship an Almighty and if you choose not to. If you're a Christian, Jew, or Muslim, you're equally an American. That's the great thing about America, is the right to worship the way you see fit.

Prayer and religion sustain me. I've received calmness in the storms of the Presidency. I love the fact that people pray for me and my family all around the country. Somebody asked me one time, "Well, how do you know?" I said, "I just feel it." Religion is an important part. I never want to impose my religion on anybody else, but when I make decisions, I stand on principle. And the principles are derived from who I am. I believe we ought to love our neighbor like we love ourself. That's manifested in public policy through the Faith-Based Initiative, where we've unleashed the armies of compassion to help seal—heal people who hurt.

I believe that God wants everybody to be free. That's what I believe. And that's part of my foreign policy. In Afghanistan, I believe that the freedom there is a gift from the Almighty, and I can't tell you how encouraged I am to see freedom on the march. And so my principles that I make decisions on are a part of me, and religion is a part of me.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Well, I respect everything that the President has said, and certainly I respect his faith. I think it's important, and I share it. I think that he just said that freedom is a gift from the Almighty. Everything is a gift from the Almighty. And as I measure the words of the Bible—and we all do; different people measure different things, the

Koran, the Torah, or—Native Americans who gave me a blessing the other day had their own special sense of connectedness to a higher being, and people all find their ways to express it.

I was taught—I went to a church school, and I was taught that the two greatest commandments are "Love the Lord, your God, with all your mind, your body, and your soul" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." And frankly, I think we have a lot more loving of our neighbor to do in this country and on this planet.

We have a separate and unequal school system in the United States of America. There's one for the people who have, and there's one for the people who don't have. And we're struggling with that today. The President and I have a difference of opinion about how we live out our sense of our faith. I talked about it earlier when I talked about the works and faith without works being dead. I think we've got a lot more work to do. And as President, I will always respect everybody's right to practice religion as they choose or not to practice, because that's part of America.

Era of Divisiveness

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry, after 9/11—and this is a new question for you—it seemed to me that the country came together as I've never seen it come together since World War II. But some of that seems to have melted away. I think it's fair to say we've become pretty polarized, perhaps because of the political season. But if you were elected President or whoever is elected President, will you set a priority in trying to bring the Nation back together? Or what would be your attitude on that?

Senator Kerry. Well, very much so. Let me pay a compliment to the President, if I may. I think in those days after 9/11, I thought the President did a terrific job. And I really was moved as well as impressed by the speech that he gave to the Congress. And I think the hug Tom Daschle gave him at that moment was about as genuine a sense of there being no Democrats, no Republicans; we were all just Americans. That's where we were.

That's not where we are today. I regret to say that the President, who called himself a uniter, not a divider, is now presiding over the most divided America in the recent memory of our country. I've never seen such ideological squabbles in the Congress of the United States. I've never seen members of a party locked out of meetings the way they're locked out today.

We have to change that, and as President, I am committed to changing that. I don't care if the idea comes from the other side or this side. I think we have to come together and work to change it. And I've done that. Over 20 years in the United States Senate, I've worked with John McCain, who's sitting here. I've worked with other colleagues. I've reached across the aisle. I've tried to find the common ground, because that's what makes us strong as Americans.

And if Americans trust me with the Presidency, I can pledge to you, we will have the most significant effort—openly, not secret meetings in the White House with special interests, not ideologically driven efforts to push people aside, but a genuine effort to try to restore America's hope and possibilities by bringing people together.

And one of the ways we're going to do it is, I'm going to work with my friend John McCain to further campaign finance reform so we get these incredible amounts of money out of the system and open it up to average people so America is really represented by the people who make up America.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. My biggest disappointment in Washington is how partisan the town is. I had a record of working with Republicans and Democrats as the Governor of Texas, and I was hopeful to be able to do the same thing. And we made good progress early on. The No Child Left Behind Act, incredibly enough, was good work between me and my administration and people like Senator Ted Kennedy. And we worked together with Democrats to relieve the tax burden on the middle class and all who pay taxes in order to make sure this economy continues to grow.

But Washington is a tough town, and the way I view it is there's a lot of entrenched special interests there, people who are on

one side of the issue or another, and they spend enormous sums of money, and they convince different Senators to tout their way or different Congressmen to talk about their issue, and they dig in.

I'll continue in the 4 years to continue to try to work to do so. My opponent said this is a bitterly divided time. It was pretty divided in the 2000 election. So, in other words, it's pretty divided during the 1990s as well. We're just in a period, and we've got to work to bring it out.

My opponent keeps mentioning John McCain, and I'm glad he did. John McCain is for me for President because he understands I have the right view in winning the war on terror and that my plan will succeed in Iraq, and my opponent has got a plan of retreat and defeat in Iraq.

Wives and Daughters of the Candidates

Mr. Schieffer. We've come, gentlemen, to our last question. And it occurred to me, as I came to this debate tonight, that the three of us share something. All three of us are surrounded by very strong women. We're all married to strong women. Each of us have two daughters that make us very proud. I'd like to ask each of you, what is the most important thing you've learned from these strong women?

President Bush. To listen to them—[*laughter*]—to stand up straight and not scowl. [*Laughter*] I love the strong women around me. I can't tell you how much I love my wife and our daughters. I am—you know, it's really interesting, I tell the people on the campaign trail, when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal, and she's out campaigning, along with our girls, and she speaks English a lot better than I do. [*Laughter*] I think people understand what she's saying.

But they see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady in Laura Bush. I can't tell you how lucky I am when I met her in the backyard at Joe and Jan O'Neill in Midland, Texas. It was the classic backyard barbecue. O'Neill said, "Come on over. I think you'll find somebody who might interest you." So I said, "All right," popped over there. There was only four of us there, and not only did she interest me, I guess you could say it was love at first sight.

Mr. Schieffer. Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Well, I guess the President and you and I are three examples of lucky people who married up. [*Laughter*] And some would say maybe me more so than others. [*Laughter*] But I can take it. [*Laughter*]

Can I say, if I could just say a word about a woman that you didn't ask about, but my mom passed away a couple years ago, just before I was deciding to run. And she was in the hospital, and I went in to talk to her and tell her what I was thinking of doing. And she looked at me from her hospital bed, and she just looked at me, and she said, "Remember, integrity, integrity, integrity." Those are the three words that she left me with.

And my daughters and my wife are people who just are filled with that sense of what's right, what's wrong. They also kick me around. [*Laughter*] They keep me honest. They don't let me get away with anything. I can sometimes take myself too seriously. They surely don't let me do that. And I'm blessed, as I think the President is blessed. As I said last time, I've watched him with the First Lady, who I admire a great deal, and his daughters—he's a great father. And I think we're both very lucky.

Closing Statements

Mr. Schieffer. Well, gentlemen, that brings us to the closing statements. Senator Kerry, I believe you're first.

Senator Kerry. My fellow Americans, as you heard from Bob Schieffer a moment ago, America is being tested by division. More than ever, we need to be united as a country. And like Franklin Roosevelt, I don't care whether an idea is a Republican idea or a Democrat idea. I just care whether it works for America and whether it's going to make us stronger.

These are dangerous times. I believe I offer tested, strong leadership that can calm the waters of a troubled world. And I believe that we can, together, do things that are within the grasp of Americans. We can lift our schools up. We can create jobs that pay more

than the jobs we're losing overseas. We can have health care for all Americans. We can further the cause of equality in our Nation.

Let me just make it clear: I will never allow any country to have a veto over our security. Just as I fought for our country as a young man, with the same passion I will fight to defend this Nation that I love. And with faith in God and with conviction in the mission of America, I believe that we can reach higher. I believe we can do better. I think the greatest possibilities of our country, our dreams and our hopes, are out there just waiting for us to grab onto them.

And I ask you to embark on that journey with me. I ask you for your trust. I ask you for your help. I ask you to allow me the privilege of leading this great Nation of ours, of helping us to be stronger here at home and to be respected again in the world and, most of all, to be safer forever.

Thank you. Good night, and God bless the United States of America.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

President Bush. In the Oval Office, there's a painting by a friend of Laura and mine named—by Tom Lea. It's a west Texas painting, a painting of a mountain scene. And he said this about it, he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It's the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." I love the optimism in that painting because that's how I feel about America.

You know, we've been through a lot together during the last 3¾ years. We've come through a recession, a stock market decline, an attack on our country. And yet, because of the hard work of the American people and good policies, this economy is growing. Over the next 4 years, we'll make sure the economy continues to grow.

We reformed our school system, and now there's an achievement gap in America that is beginning to close. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to insist on excellence in every classroom in America so that our children have a chance to realize the great promise of America.

Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work to make sure health care is available and affordable. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to rally the armies of compassion to help heal the hurt that exists in some of our country's neighborhoods.

I'm optimistic that we'll win the war on terror, but I understand it requires firm resolve and clear purpose. We must never waver in the face of this enemy that—these ideologues of hate. And as we pursue the enemy wherever it exists, we'll also spread freedom and liberty. We've got great faith in the ability of liberty to transform societies, to convert hostile—a hostile world to a peaceful world. My hope for America is a prosperous America, a hopeful America, and a safer world.

I want to thank you for listening tonight. I'm asking for your vote. God bless you.

Mr. Schieffer. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Kerry. Well, that brings these debates to a close, but the campaign goes on. I want to wish both of you the very best of luck between now and election day.

That's it for us from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. I'm Bob Schieffer of CBS News. Good night, everyone.

NOTE: The debate began at 6 p.m. in Gammage Auditorium at Arizona State University. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Senator Kerry referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Debate Watch Party in Phoenix, Arizona

October 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all very much. I've been to a lot of ballparks in my day, but I've never been to a ballpark filled with so many people who are going to go out and work the vote and make sure we can win in November.

I am so honored you came out tonight. I cannot thank you enough for greeting me and Laura and Barbara and Jenna. It warms our heart and lifts our spirit to be here with so many great American citizens. Thanks for coming. You know, when I got here, Laura

said, "Stand up straight. Don't scowl, and keep your speech short." [*Laughter*]

I meant what I said about Laura. I love her dearly. She's a great First Lady. Tonight I tried to give the people a reason to put me back in for 4 more years, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm proud to be here with Barbara and Jenna. I told them, I said, "Get you some sleep tonight, and get back out on the campaign trail." [*Laughter*]

But thank you all for coming. I love my family. I love my country. I love working with John McCain. I'm so proud to be standing with him here today. He is—he and I are going to go to Nevada tomorrow. We're going to Las Vegas. We're going to Reno. We're going to Oregon. We're going to travel this country with a message that's hopeful and optimistic, and we're going to win.

I want to thank Cindy McCain as well for being here. I want to thank my friend Senator Jon Kyl and Caryll Kyl for being here as well. I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here.

I want to thank my friend Aaron Tippin for providing some—[*applause*]—yes. I want to thank the Arizona Diamondbacks for opening up this fantastic facility for us here today. I want to thank the players who are here.

I want to thank the grassroots activists, the people who are going to put up the signs and make the phone calls and turn out the people to vote.

I know you know this, but you can now cast your ballot for Dick Cheney and me. Make sure you do so, and get your friends and neighbors to do so. We need your help. We need your vote. We're going to win in November.

I enjoyed the debate tonight. It gave me a chance to tell the American people where I want to lead for the next 4 years. We'll continue to create jobs. We'll continue to make sure our schools work. We'll work on health care. We'll make sure that America is safe and secure by staying on the offensive. We'll defeat the terrorists overseas so we do not face them here at home.

And finally, we will never forget the values of this country, our faith, our families. We will make sure that we continue to hold true to our beliefs that liberty can transform the world. We long for peace. We will spread the peace by spreading freedom.

I'm honored that you're here. Thank you for coming. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:12 p.m. at the Bank One Ballpark. In his remarks, he referred to Cindy McCain, wife of Senator John McCain; Caryll Kyl, wife of Senator Jon Kyl; and country music entertainer Aaron Tippin.

Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriations and Emergency Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005

October 13, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 4837, the "Military Construction Appropriations and Emergency Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005." This Act provides funding for construction to support the operations of the U.S. Armed Forces and for military family housing. The Act also provides the funds I requested to help citizens in Florida and elsewhere rebuild their lives in the aftermath of multiple hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Sections 107, 110, 113, 118, and 303 of the Act provide for notice to the Congress of relocation of activities between military installations, initiation of a new installation abroad, U.S. military exercises involving $100,000 in construction costs, specific actions to encourage foreign nations to assume a greater share of the common defense burden, and initiation of certain types of programs. The Supreme Court of the United States has stated that the President's authority to classify and control access to information bearing on national security flows from the Constitution and does not depend upon a legislative grant of authority. Although notice can be provided in most situations as a matter of comity, situations may arise, especially in wartime, in which the President must act promptly under his constitutional grants of executive power and authority as

Commander in Chief while protecting sensitive national security information. The executive branch shall construe these sections in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President.

Section 128 of the Act purports to require Department of Defense officials to respond in writing within 21 days to any question or inquiry from the congressional military construction appropriations subcommittees. The executive branch shall construe section 128 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, the national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

The executive branch shall construe section 110(d)(2) of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Act as contained in Division C of the Act, relating to submission of legislative recommendations, in a manner consistent with the President's exclusive constitutional authority to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 13, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 4837, approved October 13, was assigned Public Law No. 108–324. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 14.

Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One

October 14, 2004

The President. How is everybody? Ballsky [Dan Balz, Washington Post].

Q. Mr. President, how are you?

The President. Were you anticipating my arrival? [*Laughter*] Listen, 19 days to go, and I'm looking forward to it. I enjoyed myself last night. The debate phase of the campaign is over, and now it's a sprint to the finish. And the good news is I'm not going to be sprinting alone. I'll have a lot of support from people like Senator McCain and Governor Lingle. We'll be seeing Governors today in Las Vegas, and they're going to spread out all across the country, and I'm excited about it. It's—my spirits are high. I'm enthusiastic about my chances.

I'll answer a couple of questions, and then we'll let you have your coffee.

Presidential Debate in Tempe

Q. Some of the early polls say Kerry won last night. What do you have to say?

The President. Well, the voters will decide. They'll decide on November the 2d who they want to be the President.

Q. Has Kerry helped himself with these debates, if you have an opinion?

The President. The voters will decide that. You know, that's—the great thing about a campaign, all the speculation ends on election day.

Senator John McCain. Can I just say, on substance, there is no doubt. When you talk about Social Security, they all want to reform it. You don't know how to pay for it. You can't answer the question, and people notice that. On substance, the President won, and that's what the people think about when they go into the ballot booth.

Can I also say at that event afterwards, 40,000 citizens of Arizona showed up at Bank One Ballpark. There has never been an event like that in the history of our State, not only the numbers but the enthusiasm.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think your best moment was last night?

The President. Telling people what I think. You know, the pundits and the spinners and the—they'll all have their opinion, but there's only one opinion that matters, and that's the opinion of the American people on November the 2d. I feel great about where we are. There's lot of enthusiasm for my candidacy. People have seen me lead, and they also know that I've got plans for the next 4 years. And as you'll hear me today, I'm optimistic about the future of this country.

Governor Linda Lingle. I thought that a great moment was the question about jobs. It's more than statistics. I think the President made a key point when he said the important point is that a solid education for the children in America is the best way to ensure a sound economy over the long term. It's common

sense. It's why No Child Left Behind is not just important for education, it's important for the sustained economic progress of this Nation.

And personally, the part I liked is when the President talked about his feelings for Mrs. Bush and his daughters. I thought that was just so touching. I think people across America felt how close they were as a family, and I thought it was a really important part of the debate as well.

The President. All right, I'm going to let you all go back to your breakfast.

Senator McCain. Can I just mention one thing? Again, on Social Security, the President has pledged to reform Social Security and bring America together on that issue. You can't just say that the status quo will prevail on Social Security. Millions and millions of baby boomers are going to be facing retirement. This is an issue that has got to be the highest priority. The President has pledged to address it and not be satisfied with the status quo.

Q. Mr. President, one question that you were asked last night about the cost, the transition cost of——

The President. Well, that's part of bringing people together, to figure out how to address the costs. The point is, is that I'm the President who understands Social Security needs to be reformed.

Listen, thank you. Good to see you, Dan. Get a smile on your faces, everybody, 18 days left.

Q. Will you come visit us again?

Senator McCain. Every day. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm a better person for it, of course. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:07 a.m. while en route to Las Vegas, Nevada. Gov. Linda Lingle of Hawaii participated in the exchange. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in Las Vegas, Nevada

October 14, 2004

The President. I appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you all being here. With only 19 days to the election, the finish line is in sight, and Nevada will be a part of a great nationwide victory in November the 2d.

I'm proud to be on stage with so many of the Governors, the Nation's Governors. I'm a member of the ex-Governors club. They'll be a member of that club one day soon. [*Laughter*] I know these folks really well. They're hard-working. They bring people together to get the job done in their States. They focus on results, and that's what I've done as your President, and that's what I'll do for 4 more years.

I want to thank our host, Governor Kenny Guinn, for his hospitality. It wasn't very hard to get the Governors to come to Vegas—[*laughter*]—to begin a road trip. The next 2 days, they're going to travel our country to tell people that leadership matters. They're going to tell the people that the best way to make sure America has strong and steady and principled leadership is to put Dick Cheney and me back into office.

It's great to be in the home of the Running Rebels. And that's what I'm doing: I'm running, and I'm not going to stop until election day. Look, my only regret is that Laura is not here to see this crowd. She's right around the corner at the AARP convention. So the convention said, "Send your best speaker." [*Laughter*] When I married Laura, she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. When the people see her speak, they see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He did a really good job in his debate. I admit it, he doesn't have the—he didn't have the waviest hair there on the set. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, his ability to get the job done for the American people.

After this we're going to Reno, and then we're going up to Oregon, and I'm proud to be traveling with a great American in John McCain. I like traveling with John. We have a lot of fun. We laugh. We enjoy each other's company, and we share something in common: We both love our Nation.

I want to thank Senator John Ensign, the great Senator from Nevada, for being here

today, and Congressman John Porter—make sure you put him back into office. Congressman Jim Gibbons from the northern part of this State is with us today as well. Congressman, thanks for coming. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here.

I want to thank my friend Lee Greenwood for entertaining the folks. Thank you for coming.

I particularly want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people who are going to put up the signs and make the phone calls. I'm here to thank you in advance for what you're going to do over the course of the next 19 days. You're going to tell people they have a duty in our democracy to vote. Get them headed to the polls. But don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. And when you get them headed to the polls, tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back into office.

We had a great debate last night. Those debates, all three debates, clarified the differences in our records, our approaches, and our plans for the future. I'm proud of my record. My opponent seemed to want to avoid talking about his. My record is one of lowering taxes, reforming education, providing prescription drugs to seniors, improving our homeland protection, and waging an aggressive war against the terrorists.

The Senator's record is 20 years of out-of-the-mainstream votes without many significant reforms or results.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Our very different records are a window into what we believe and what we'll do in the next 4 years. The Senator believes in a bigger Government. I believe in more freedom and choices for our citizens. The Senator believes Government should dictate. I believe you should make the decisions.

Sometimes it's a little hard to tell exactly what he believes—[*laughter*]—because he tries to obscure his votes. Take health care. Once again, last night, with a straight face—[*laughter*]—the Senator tried to say his health care plan is not a Government plan. [*Laughter*] Yet, 22 million new people will be enrolled in a Government program under his plan, the largest expansion of Government health care ever. Eighty percent of the newly insured on his plan would be placed on a Government program like Medicaid. The Senator claimed his plan would help small businesses, yet a study conducted by small-business groups this week concluded Senator Kerry's plan is an overpriced albatross.

I have a different view. I want to make health care more available and affordable by helping small businesses, not saddling them with a bunch of Government rules.

And once again, last night, with a straight face, the Senator, shall we say, refined his answer on the proposed "global test" he would administer before acting to defend America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. After trying to say it wasn't really a test at all, last night he once again defended his approach, saying, "I think it makes sense." [*Laughter*] The Senator now says we have to pass some international truth standard. Those are his words. The truth is, we should never turn over America's national security decisions to international bodies or leaders of other countries.

In the last few years, the American people have gotten to know me. They know my blunt way of speaking. I get that from Mom. They know I sometimes mangle the English language. [*Laughter*] I get that from Dad. [*Laughter*] Americans also know that I tell you exactly what I'm going to do and I keep my word.

When I came into office, the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months. The American economy was sliding into a recession. To help families and get this economy growing again, I pledged to reduce taxes. I kept my word, and the results are clear. The recession was one of the shallowest in American history.

Over the last 3 years, our economy has grown at the fastest rate of any major industrialized nation. In the past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate in America is at 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Nevada is 4 percent. The mining sector is strong. Farm

and ranch income is up. More people are owning their own home.

We're moving forward, and there is much more to do. To make sure quality jobs are created in America and to make sure people can find work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we need to reduce the regulations on our job creators. We must end junk lawsuits, which are threatening the small businesses which create most new jobs.

To keep jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. My plan encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages new technologies. It encourages clean coal technology and increased domestic production. To keep jobs here, our Nation must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To protect jobs and communities in the West, we need to reduce the risk of devastating wildfires. That's why I was proud to sign the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. Under this good law, we are cleaning the underbrush that serves as fuel for fires. Because we acted, our forests are healthier; residents and small businesses are safer; and people across the West are better off.

To create jobs, we need to reject economic isolationism and open up markets around the world for U.S. products. Americans can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair. To create jobs, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

My opponent has his own history on the economy.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In 20 years as a Senator from Massachusetts, he's built up quite a record—of a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] He's voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That is a vote for a tax increase about five times every year.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think that qualifies as a pattern. [*Laughter*] He can run from his record, but he cannot hide. Now he's promising not to raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes in the top two income brackets would raise about $600 billion. But his spending promises will cost about 4 times that much, more than 2.2 trillion. That's with a "T." [*Laughter*] That's a lot even for somebody from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] See, you can't have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending promises he made, he'll have to raise your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The choice in this election is clear. My opponent has a history of voting for higher taxes, and he promised to raise them in this campaign. And that's the kind of promise a Washington politician usually keeps. [*Laughter*] I believe our families and our economy are better off when Americans keep more of what they earn. We will keep your taxes low.

When I came into office, the public schools had been waiting for decades for hopeful reform. Too many of our children were shuffled through school without learning the basics. I pledged to restore accountability to the schools and end the soft bigotry of low expectations, and I kept my word. Seeing the results—our children are making sustained gains in reading and math. We're closing the achievement gap for minority students. We're making progress for our families. We will leave no child behind.

To build a more hopeful America, we must have the best-prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college education, yet only about one in four of our students gets there. So we'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous examination before graduation from high school. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

My opponent has a history on education issues, a history of doing almost nothing. [*Laughter*] The Senator has pledged to weaken the No Child Left Behind Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He has proposed diluting the accountability standards and looking at

measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students are learning.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His proposals would undermine the high standards and accountability we worked hard to pass. We're moving beyond the old days of failure and mediocrity and low standards, and we're not going to go back.

When I came to office, we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't. For example, Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for heart surgery but wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. It didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. I pledged to bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen and modernize Medicare for our seniors, and I kept my word. The results are clear. Seniors are already getting discounts on medicines, and beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We're moving forward on health care, and there's much more to do. We need to make health care more affordable and more available for all our people. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe in community health centers, places where the poor and the indigent can get care. In a new term, we'll make sure every poor county in America has a community health center. We need to do more to make sure more children are fully subscribed in our programs for low-income families.

We must do more to make sure health care is affordable. You know, most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses have trouble affording health care. To help more workers get health care, we should allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies do.

To make sure health care is affordable, we have got to expand health savings accounts so workers in small businesses are able to pay lower premiums and people can save tax-free in a health care account they call their own.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we have got to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running up the costs of your health care. All the lawsuits force doctors to practice defensive medicine, which costs our Government about $28 billion a year. They cost our Nation's economy anywhere from 60 to 100 billion dollars a year. The lawsuits drive up insurance premiums, which drive good doctors out of practice.

Today I met Dr. James Barber. Three years ago, Dr. Barber paid $27,000 in insurance premiums as an ob-gyn in Henderson. Last year's premiums would have been more than $100,000. He had to stop delivering babies in Nevada. He's now practicing in California, where they have reasonable medical liability laws. His premiums in California are $33,000, 70 percent of what they would cost in Nevada.

I also met one of his former patients, Nicole Byrne. She said Dr. Barber saved her life during a previous pregnancy. Now she's pregnant again, and she is devastated that Dr. Barber won't be able to deliver her babies. Nicole and Dr. Barber understand that you cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

The choice in this election is clear. My opponent wants to move in the direction of Government-run health care. I believe health decisions ought to be made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC. I've set out policies that move America toward a positive and optimistic vision. I believe our country can and must be an ownership society. There's a saying that no one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of wisdom in that statement. [*Laughter*] When you own something, you care about it and you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

So we're encouraging entrepreneurship, because every time a small business is started, someone is achieving the American

Dream. We're encouraging health savings accounts so people have the security of owning their own health care plan. We're promoting homeownership. More and more Americans own a home today. I love it when somebody opens the door of the place they live and says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

In a new term, I will take the next great step to build an ownership society by strengthening Social Security. Our Social Security system needs fixing. First, we'll make sure we keep the promise to those who are on Social Security today. I remember, in the 2000 campaign, those ads saying, "If George W. gets elected, they're going to take away your check." Our seniors got their checks. Nobody is going to take away our seniors' checks. Baby boomers like me are going to be just fine when it comes to Social Security.

But our children and our grandchildren are understandably worried about whether Social Security will be around when they need it, and we need to be concerned about them. For their sake, we must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their payroll taxes in a personal account that Washington politicians can never take away. My opponent wants to maintain the status quo when it comes to Social Security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That is unacceptable. He's against Social Security—these Social Security reforms. And he's just about against just about every other reform that gives more authority and control to individuals. On issue after issue, from Medicare without choices to schools with less accountability to higher taxes, he takes the side of more centralized control and more bureaucracy. There's a word for that attitude. It's called liberalism. Now, he dismisses that as a label—must have seen it differently when he said to a newspaper, "I'm a liberal and proud of it." [*Laughter*]

Others have noticed. The nonpartisan National Journal magazine did a study and named him the most liberal member of the United States Senate. And that's saying something. [*Laughter*] Another group known as the Americans for Democratic Action have given Senator Kerry a higher lifetime liberal rating than Senator Ted Kennedy, and that's an accomplishment.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, I have a different record and a different philosophy. I don't believe in big Government, and I don't believe in indifferent Government. I am a compassionate conservative. I believe in policies that empower people to improve their lives, not try to run their lives.

In this time of change, some things do not change. Those are the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent's words on these issues are a little muddy, but his record is plenty clear. [*Laughter*] He says he supports the institution of marriage, but he voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which a bipartisan Congress overwhelmingly passed and my predecessor signed into law. He voted against the ban on the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He called himself the candidate of conservative values, but he has described the Reagan years as a time of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the left bank. He can run, but he cannot hide.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power,

but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We will defend the homeland. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We'll transform the All-Volunteer Army, and we'll keep it an all-volunteer army. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will continue to spread freedom and liberty, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, Afghanistan is a free nation fighting terror. And last Saturday, the people of Afghanistan voted for a President. Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders. Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests. Libya is dismantling its weapons programs. The army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom. And more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's leaders and associates have been brought to justice.

We've got an aggressive strategy to keep us safe, and we'll stand with the people of a free Afghanistan and Iraq. Think about what happened in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that the Taliban ran that country. Young girls couldn't even go to school. They were not only harboring terrorists; they had this dark ideology of hate. And people showed up in droves to vote. Freedom is powerful. People have gone from darkness to light, because of liberty. The first voter in the Afghan Presidential election was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq is headed toward elections. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace. Our mission is clear. We'll help the countries train their armies and their police so they can do the hard work of defending democracy. We'll help them get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We have got a great United States military. I want to thank all the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear today's uniform. I want to thank the military families who are with us today for their sacrifices. And I want to assure the families, we'll keep the commitment I made to our troops. We will make sure they have all the resources they need to complete their missions.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked for an $87 billion supplemental request, money necessary to support those troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the supplemental request, the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, remind your fellow citizens that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then against sending the money to support them in harm's way, two of whom—two of those four—are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember my opponent's famous quote, when asked about that vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, he's given a lot of explanations since that one. One of the most interesting ones is when he finally said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women want to grow up in a free society and raise their children in a free society. I believe that if given a chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve and clear vision and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." Governor Pataki was with me. He knows—he remembers those workers and those police and firefighters coming out of the rubble, bloodshot eyes. A guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to defend this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your State asking for the vote, I made this pledge: If you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the Thomas & Mack Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; country music entertainer Lee Greenwood; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; and Gov. George E. Pataki of New York.

Remarks in Reno, Nevada

October 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming out today. It's great to be back in Nevada. It's such a beautiful day. I'm proud to be here in the Biggest Little City in the World. I'm really pleased to be in a place where the cowboy hats outnumber the suits.

Thank you all for coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. And I want your help. Tell your friends and neighbors to go to the polls on November the 2d. Everybody ought to vote in this country. And tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it. We were in Las Vegas earlier, and they had an AARP convention there. And the head of the AARP said, "Send your family's best speaker." [*Laughter*] So Laura went. [*Laughter*] You know, when I married her, I said—she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I never have to give a speech." I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. When she speaks, America sees a compassionate, warm, great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine man with good judgment and great experience. He's getting the job done for the American people. I'm proud to be introduced by a unique and strong and great American in John McCain. When he says he's for you, he's really for you. Las Vegas this morning, Reno right now, and then we're headed to Medford, Oregon. He's by my side. He's campaigning hard, and I'm proud to have his support.

And I'm proud of the job that Senator John Ensign is doing for the great State of Nevada. He's a really fine man. I want to thank Jim Gibbons for his service as well. Old Congressman Greg Walden from Oregon snuck across the State line. He's with us today. Thanks for coming, Greg. I appreciate you being here.

I'm really proud that Dema Guinn is with us, the first lady of the great State of Nevada. Thank for coming, Dema. I'm proud you're here. How about your attorney general, Brian Sandoval? What a class act he is. I want to thank Brian Krolicki, the State treasurer, for being with us today. I want to thank—Dean Heller is with us today. I'm proud he's here.

I want to thank all the State and local officials. But mainly, I want to thank the grassroots activists, the people who are putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls, the people turning out the vote. With your help, we'll carry Nevada and win a great victory in November.

I enjoyed the debate last night. You know, those debates clarify the differences in our record, our approach, and our plans for the future. I'm proud of my record. My opponent seemed to want to avoid talking about his. [*Laughter*] My record is one of lowering taxes, reforming education, providing prescription drug coverage to seniors, improving homeland protections, and waging an aggressive war against the ideologues of hate.

The Senator's record is 20 years of out-of-the-mainstream votes without many significant reforms or results. Our very different records are a window into what we believe and what we'll do for the next 4 years. The Senator believes in a bigger Federal Government. I believe in more freedom and more choices for individual Americans. The Senator believes Government should dictate. I believe you should decide.

Sometimes it's a little hard to tell exactly what he believes—[*laughter*]—as he tries to obscure his approach to Government. Take health care. Once again, last night, with a straight face—[*laughter*]—the Senator tried to say his health care plan is not a Government plan. [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] Yet 22 million new people would enroll on a Government program under his plan, the largest expansion of Government health care ever. Eighty percent of the newly insured on his plan would be placed on a Government program like Medicaid. The Senator claimed his plan would help small business, yet a study conducted by small-businesses groups concluded Senator Kerry's plan is an overpriced albatross that would saddle small businesses with 225 new mandates.

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Audience members. Boo-o-o!

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In the past 13 months, we've added more than 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate in America is at 5.4 percent, below the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 4 percent. Mining sector is strong. Farm and ranch income is up. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America. We're moving forward, and there's more to do.

To make sure quality jobs are created here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on the job creators. That means we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that make it hard to expand employment.

To create jobs, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It encourages conservation. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages new technologies. It encourages clean coal technology and increased domestic production. To keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To protect jobs and communities in the West, we need to reduce the risk of devastating wildfire. I was proud to sign the Health Forests Restoration Act. I want to thank the three Members of Congress for working on that act. Under this good law, we're clearing the underbrush that serves as

fuel for fires. Because we acted, our forests are healthier, residents and small businesses are safer, and people across the West are better off.

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Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think that qualifies as a pattern. [*Laughter*] He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Now the Senator—he looked in the camera last Friday night and promised not to raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets would raise about $600 billion, but his spending promises cost about 4 times that much—about 2.2 trillion. That's with a "T." [*Laughter*] See, you can't have it both ways. To pay for all his big spending promises he's made, he's going to have to raise your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The choice in this election is clear when it comes to taxes. My opponent has a history of voting for higher taxes, and he's promised to raise them on the campaign trail, and that's a promise politicians usually keep.

I believe our families and our economy are better off when Americans keep more of what they earn. In a new term, I'll work with Congress to keep your taxes low.

When I came into office, our public schools had been waiting decades for hopeful reform. Too many of our children were shuffled through schools, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. I pledged to restore accountability to the schools and end the soft bigotry of low expectations, and I kept my word. We're now seeing results. Our children are making sustained gains in reading and math. We're closing the achievement gap for minority students. We're making progress for America's families. We will leave no child behind.

To make sure jobs are here and to build a more hopeful America, we must have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there. So we'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous examination before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

My opponent has a history on education issues, a history of doing almost nothing. [*Laughter*] The Senator has pledged to weaken the No Child Left Behind Act. He's proposed diluting the accountability standards and looking at measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students are learning. His proposals would undermine the high standards and accountability we worked hard to pass. We've moved beyond the old days of failure and mediocrity and low standards, and we're not going to go back.

When I came into office, we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't. Think about this: Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't fair to seniors. It certainly wasn't fair to taxpayers. I brought Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen and modernize Medicare for our seniors. And I kept my word.

We're moving forward on health care, and there's more to do. We need to make health care more affordable and more available for all our people. We'll have a safety net for those with the greatest need. I believe in community health centers, places where the

poor and the indigent can get primary preventative care. In a new term, we'll make sure every poor county in America has a community health center. We'll do more to make sure poor children are fully subscribed in our programs for low-income families.

We'll do more to make sure health care is affordable. Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To help workers get the health care, we should allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies can do. We've got to expand health savings accounts so workers and small businesses are able to pay lower premiums, and people can save tax-free in a health care account that they call their own.

And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we must do something about the junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. By forcing doctors to practice defensive medicine, medical lawsuits cost the Government about $28 billion a year. They cost our Nation's economy anywhere from 60 to 100 billion dollars a year. They drive up insurance premiums, which drive good doctors out of practice.

Today in Las Vegas, I met Dr. James Barber. Three years ago, Dr. Barber paid $27,000 in insurance premiums as an ob-gyn in Henderson, Nevada. Last year's premiums would have been more than $100,000. So he had to stop delivering babies here, and he moved his practice to California. Because the medical liability laws in California have reasonable caps, that good doctor's premiums cost him about $33,000 a year. I also met one of his former patients, Nicole Byrne. Nicole Byrne said that Dr. Barber saved her life during a previous pregnancy. Now she's pregnant again, and she's devastated that Dr. Barber will not be around to deliver her baby. Nicole and Dr. Barber understand you can't be pro-patient, pro-doctor, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now. The choice is clear in this election. My opponent wants to move in the direction of Government-run health care. I believe the health decisions ought to be made by patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

I've set out policies that move our country toward an optimistic and positive vision. I believe our country can become an ownership society. You know, there's an old saying that no one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of wisdom in that statement. When you own something, you care about it; you have a vital stake in the future of our great country.

So we're encouraging entrepreneurship, because every time a small business is started, someone is achieving the American Dream. We're encouraging health savings accounts so people have the security of owning and managing their own health care. We're promoting homeownership. I love the fact that more citizens than ever are able to open up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

In a new term, I'll take the next great step to build an ownership society by strengthening Social Security. Now, listen, our Social Security system needs fixing. I want the seniors out here to hear me loud and clear: You'll get your check. I remember when I was running in 2000, they said, "If George W. gets elected, you won't get your Social Security check." You got your checks. You'll continue to get your check. When you hear them talk about reform, don't let them fool you and say you're not going to get your check. Baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. They are understandably worried about whether Social Security will be around when they need it. And for their sake, we must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their own payroll taxes in a personal savings account that will earn compounded rate of interest, an account that Washington cannot take away.

My opponent wants to maintain the status quo when it comes to Social Security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's against these Social Security reforms. As a matter of fact, he's just about against about every other reform that gives more authority and control to individuals. On issue after issue, from Medicare without choices to schools with less accountability to higher taxes, he takes the side of more centralized control and bigger Government. There's a word for that attitude. It's called liberalism. [*Laughter*] My opponent dismisses that as a label. He must have seen it differently when he said to a newspaper, "I'm a liberal and proud of it." [*Laughter*]

Others have noticed. The nonpartisan National Journal magazine did a study and named him the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. That's hard work. [*Laughter*] A group known as the Americans for Democratic Action have given Senator Kerry a higher lifetime liberal rating than Ted Kennedy. That's an accomplishment. [*Laughter*]

I have a different record and a different philosophy. I don't believe in big Government, and I don't believe in indifferent Government. I'm a compassionate conservative. I believe in policies that empower people to improve their lives, not try to run their lives. We're helping men and women find the skills and tools necessary to prosper in a time of change. We're helping all Americans to have a future of dignity and independence, and that is how I will lead our country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In this time of change, some things do not change. These are the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In the times of change, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent's words on these issues are a little muddy, but his record is clear. [*Laughter*] He says he supports the institution of marriage, but he voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which a bipartisan Congress overwhelmingly passed and which President Clinton signed. He voted against the ban on the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He calls himself the candidate of conservative values, but he described the Reagan years as a time of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the left bank. He can run, but he cannot hide.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We'll transform the All-Volunteer Army—we'll keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll spread freedom and liberty. And we'll prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, Afghanistan is a free society and is an ally in fighting the war against terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al

Qaida's key leaders and associates have been brought to justice.

Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that's why I think it's so significant that because we defended ourselves, we liberated 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Freedom helps us keep the peace. That's why it was so uplifting to see what took place in Afghanistan. Remember what that society was like. These people lived under the brutal darkness of the Taliban regime. Young girls weren't allowed to go to school. Their mothers were whipped in the public squares if they didn't toe the ideology of hate.

But because we acted, there's light in Afghanistan. Thousands and thousands of people voted in the Presidential elections. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman in Afghanistan. Iraq will have elections in January. Our mission is clear. We will help these countries train armies and police so they can do the hard work of defending freedom and democracy. We'll help them get on the path to stability as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here for the sacrifices they have made. And I want to assure you, we'll keep our commitments to our troops. We will make sure they have the resources they need to complete their missions.

And that's why I went to the Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion, supplemental request to help our troops in combat both in Afghanistan and Iraq. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people there's only 4 United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against the support of our troops——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——only 4 of 100, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him how he could have made that vote. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I suspect a lot of people in Reno don't talk that way. [*Laughter*] He's given several explanations since then. One of my favorites is, he said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I want you to explain this to your friends and neighbors this way. One of my friends in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. What's interesting about that, it wasn't all that long ago that Japan was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad fought against the Japanese. John's dad—I'm sure your dads and granddads did as well. They were our sworn enemy. But because Harry S. Truman, President of the United States then, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally, we worked to help Japan become a democracy. There were a lot of people in our country that didn't agree with that. "Why bother? They're the enemy. Why help them? They hurt my family." There was a lot of reasons, a lot of pessimism that Japan couldn't conceivably become a self-governing democracy. But she did.

And as a result of that, I sit down at the table today with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace we all want. He's an ally.

And someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about keeping the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women in the Middle East want to grow up in a free society. I believe if given a chance, the people in that region will embrace the

most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and the deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the folks coming out of the rubble. A guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. On to victory. I appreciate you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. at Rancho San Rafael Park. In his remarks, he referred to Dema Guinn, wife of Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; State Attorney General Brian Sandoval, State Treasurer Brian K. Krolicki, and Secretary of State Dean Heller of Nevada; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Central Point, Oregon

October 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. It's great to be back in Oregon. It's great to be back in Jackson County, Oregon. Laura and I are staying at the Jacksonville Inn tonight. Last President to stay there was Rutherford B. Hayes. [*Laughter*] I understand Rutherford complained about the tab. [*Laughter*] I'm not going to. We're thrilled to be here.

I want to thank not only you all coming from Jackson County, I want to thank the folks from the Klamath Basin who are here as well. It's great to be in a part of the world where the boots outnumber the suits.

I've come to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. Tell your friends and neighbors we have a duty in our country to vote. Head them to the polls, Republicans and independents and discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And when you get them heading to the polls, tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America to put me and Dick Cheney back into office.

I am keeping great company with the First Lady. She is—we were in Las Vegas earlier today, and they had the AARP convention, and so they said, "Why don't you send your best speaker to that convention." So Laura spoke there, and I went to the rally. [*Laughter*] She was a public school librarian when I met her again. We went to the 7th grade together at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, how about that? [*Laughter*] And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you. I just never want to have to give a speech." I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the deal, and the people of America see a compassionate, decent, strong woman when she gets up and gives a speech.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a good, strong man. I'm proud to be up here with a fine American, a great friend, John McCain. I thank you, John, for coming. We have a lot of fun traveling together. It makes a big difference that he's campaigning for me. I can't thank him enough for doing so.

I'm also proud to be up on the stage with a fine United States Senator in Gordon Smith. We're real fond of Greg Walden and Mylene, his wife. You're well represented in the Halls of Congress by Greg. He's a good, solid man. All he does is talk about water—[*laughter*]—and forests and the people of this district.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people who are putting up the signs and turning out the vote. With your help, we'll carry Oregon and win a great victory in November.

I enjoyed the debate last night. You know, these debates clarify the differences in our records, our approaches, and our plans for the future. I'm proud of my record. My opponent seemed to want to avoid talking about his. [*Laughter*] My record is one of lowering taxes, of reforming education, providing prescription drug coverage to seniors, improving our homeland protections, and waging an aggressive war against the ideologues of hate.

The Senator's record is 20 years of out-of-the-mainstream votes without many significant reforms or results. Our very different records are a window into what we believe and what we do—we'll do for the next 4 years. That's why these debates are important. See, the Senator believes in a bigger Government. I believe in more freedom and choices for the citizens of this country. The Senator believes Government ought to dictate. I believe you ought to decide.

And sometimes it's a little hard to tell exactly what he believes. [*Laughter*] He tries to obscure his philosophy. Take health care. Once again, last night, with a straight face, the Senator tried to say his health care plan is not a Government plan. I could barely contain myself when I heard that. Yet 22 million people would enroll on a Government program under his plan. That would be the largest expansion of Government health care ever. Eighty percent of the newly insured on his plan would be placed on a Government program like Medicaid. He claimed his position would help small business. It's not what the people who studied his plan say. They say his plan would be an overpriced albatross that would saddle small business with 225 new mandates.

I have a different view. I want to make health care more affordable and available by helping small businesses, not by saddling them with a bunch of regulations.

Once again, last night, with a straight face, the Senator said—well, shall we say, refined his answer on his proposed "global test." That's the test he would administer before defending America. After trying to say it really wasn't a test at all, last night he once again defended his approach, saying, "I think it makes sense." [*Laughter*] The Senator now says we'd have to pass some international truth standard. The truth is we should never turn America's national security decisions over to international bodies or leaders of other countries.

The last few years, the American people have gotten to know me. They know my blunt way of speaking. I get that from my mom. [*Laughter*] They know I sometimes mangle the English language. [*Laughter*] I get that from my dad. [*Laughter*] Americans also know I tell you exactly what I'm going to do, and I keep my word.

When we came into office, the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months and the American economy was sliding into a recession. To help families and get this economy growing again, I pledged to reduce taxes. I kept my word. The results are clear. The recession was one of the shallowest in American history.

Over the last 3 years, our economy has grown at the fastest rate as any in nearly 20 years. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. Farm and ranch incomes are up.

The past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs in America. The unemployment rate across our country is 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Here in Oregon, I understand that some of the areas are lagging behind, but we're making progress. This State has added more than 40,000 jobs since January of 2002. So long as somebody is looking for work and can't find a job, means we'll continue to expand the economy with pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer, pro-small-business policies.

To make sure we can find job—people can find jobs here, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs to create, you've got to be a good place to create jobs. That means we need less regulations on our small businesses. We need to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are making it harder for our employers to expand the job base.

To create jobs, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It encourages conservation. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages new technologies. It encourages clean coal technology. It encourages increased domestic production. To create jobs here in America, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To protect jobs in communities in the West, we need to reduce the risk of devastating wildfires. That's why I was proud to work on and sign the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. Under this good law, we're clearing the underbrush that serves as fuel for fire. Because we acted, our forests are healthier, residents and small businesses are safer, and people across the West are better off.

My opponent says he's in touch with the West, but sometimes I think he means western Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] When the Healthy Forests bill came up in the Senate, it had the support of both Senators from Oregon, one Republican and one Democrat. It had the strong support of your Congressman. And Senator Kerry was against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When I signed the Healthy Forests Act last December, he said, "We're taking a chainsaw to public forests."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now it's time to campaign in the West. He's kind of turning his position around a little bit. [*Laughter*] He's actually—he's now saying that he actually likes a lot of part of the law. I guess it's not only the wildfires that shift in the wind.

To create jobs, we need to reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair. To create jobs, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. My opponent has his own history on the economy. In 20 years as a Senator from Massachusetts, he's built the record of a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] He's voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a vote for a tax increase about five times every year he's served in the Senate. I think that qualifies as a pattern. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

You might remember the debate last Friday. The Senator looked in the camera and promised not to raise taxes on anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem with that is to keep that promise, he must break all his other ones. His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets will raise about $600 billion, but his spending promises will cost almost four times as much, more than 2.2 trillion. That's with a "T". See, you can't have it both ways. To pay for all his promises, his spending promises, he's going to have to raise your taxes. The choice in this election is clear when it comes to taxes.

He's had a—tell your friends and neighbors he's had a history of voting to raise taxes, and he has promised to raise them in this campaign. And that's the kind of promise a Washington politician usually keeps. [*Laughter*]

I believe our families and our economy are better off when Americans keep more of what they earn. In a new term, I will work with the United States Congress to keep your taxes low.

When I came to office, our public schools had been waiting for decades for hopeful reform. Too many of our children were shuffled through school, year after year, grade after grade, without learning the basics. I pledged to restore accountability to our schools and end the soft bigotry of low expectations. I kept my word. We're now seeing the results of our reforms. Our children are making sustained gains in reading and math. We're closing the achievement gap for minority students. We're making progress for our families. We will leave no child behind in America.

To build a more hopeful America, we must have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet one in four of our students gets there. So we'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous

exam before graduation. By raising the performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their careers with a college diploma.

When I came into office, we had a problem with Medicare. Medicine was changing, but Medicare was not. For example, Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that might prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. I pledged to bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen and modernize Medicare for our seniors, and I kept my word. Seniors are already getting discounts on medicine, and beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

No, we're moving forward on health care, and there's much more to do. We need to make health care more affordable and available for all our people. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe in community health centers, a place where the poor and the indigent can get primary and preventative care. In a new term, we'll make sure every poor county in America has a community health center. We need to do more to make sure poor children are fully subscribed in our programs for low-income families so they can get the health care they need.

We must do more to make sure health care is affordable. Most of the uninsured in America are employees of small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To help more workers get health care, we should allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts as big businesses can do. We must expand health savings accounts so workers and small businesses are able to pay lower premiums and people can save tax-free in a health care account they call their own.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. By forcing doctors to practice defensive medicine, medical lawsuits cost the Government about $28 billion a year. They cost our Nation's economy anywhere from 60 to 100 billion dollars a year. They drive up insurance premiums, which drives good docs out of practice. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a plaintiff attorney on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

The choice for health care is clear in this election. My opponent wants to move in the direction of Government-run health care. I believe health decisions should be made by patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

I've set out policies that move America toward a positive and optimistic vision. I believe our country can be an ownership society. You know, there's an old saying: No one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*] A lot of wisdom in that statement. When you own something, you care about it. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. We're encouraging entrepreneurship, because every time a small business is started, someone is achieving the American Dream. We're encouraging health savings accounts so people have the security of owning their own health care plan. We're providing—promoting homeownership. Listen, I love it when more and more people open up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

In a new term, I'll take the next great step to build an ownership society by strengthening Social Security. Our Social Security system needs fixing. We'll keep the promise of Social Security to our seniors. You might remember the 2000 campaign, when they ran those ads that said, "If George W. gets in, the seniors won't get their checks." The seniors got their checks, and our seniors will continue to get checks. And the baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to be worried about whether Social Security will be around when they need it. For their sake, we must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their

payroll taxes in a personal savings account that they can call their own, that the Government will not take away.

When it comes to Social Security, my opponent wants to maintain the status quo.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's unacceptable. He's against these Social Security reforms. He's against just about every reform that gives more authority and more control to the individual. On issue after issue, from Medicare without choices to schools with less accountability to higher taxes, he takes the side of more centralized control and more bureaucracies. And there's a word for that attitude. It's called liberalism.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He dismisses that as a label, but he must have seen it differently when he said to a newspaper, "I am a liberal and proud of it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The nonpartisan National Journal magazine did a study and named him the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. That takes a lot of hard work. [*Laughter*] Another group known as the Americans for Democratic Action has given Senator Kerry a higher lifetime liberal rating than that given to Ted Kennedy. And that's an accomplishment. [*Laughter*]

I have a different record and a different philosophy. I don't believe in big Government, and I don't believe in indifferent Government. I'm a compassionate conservative. I believe in policies that empower people to improve their lives, not in policies that try to run their lives.

These are changing times, but in a time of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and a strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent's words on these issues are a little muddy, but his record is pretty clear. He says he supports the institution of marriage, but he voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. One time he called himself the candidate of conservative values, but he has described the Reagan years as a period of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. [*Laughter*] He can run, but he cannot hide.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We're strengthening our intelligence. We're transforming our military. We will keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will spread freedom and liberty. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, because the United States of America led, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing

terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

In defending ourselves, we have freed 50 million people. Think about what happened recently in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that the country was ruled by brutal ideologues of hate who had a dark vision of the world. Young girls were not allowed to go to school—many young girls were not. Their moms, if they didn't toe the ideological line, were taken into the public square and whipped, sometimes killed in a sports stadium. Recently, thousands and thousands of Afghan citizens once under the rule of the Taliban voted in a Presidential election. The first voter in that election was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq will have elections in January. We're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. When America gives its word, America must keep its word. And we're standing with them because we understand that free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace.

Our mission is clear. We'll help those countries train their armies and police forces so the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending democracy. We will help them get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I see some folks who wear the uniform. Thank you for your service. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who have joined us today. I assure you, we'll keep the commitment I made to our troops and their loved ones. We'll make sure they have all the resources they need to complete their missions.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and requested $87 billion for important funding to support our troops in combat. We received great support for that funding request. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops in harm's way, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As you round up the vote, remind people of this fact: Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force, and then voted against funding the troops, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps one of the most famous quotes of the 2004 campaign. When asked to explain his vote, my opponent said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I suspect a lot of people in Jackson County, Oregon, don't speak that way. And they kept pressing him, and he had all kinds of different explanations. One of the most interesting was, he finally said, "It is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. Let me tell you a story that will help make the point. One of our good friends is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. That doesn't sound unusual, probably, except for think about what life was like some 60 years ago with the Japanese. They were our mortal enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. Senator McCain's dad fought against the Japanese. I'm confident there are people here whose dad or granddad saw combat against the Japanese. It was a tough war.

After we won the war, Harry S. Truman believed in the transformational power of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally, and so he worked to build a democracy in Japan. There were a lot of citizens here who, I'm confident, weren't very happy about that decision. "Why would you want to work with an enemy? The enemy can't possibly convert to a democracy. Too many of our lives were lost during the war." But we had great faith in the ability of liberty to transform a nation. And today, because of that faith, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about

the peace we all want, talking about how to deal with the issues of the world to make the world more peaceful.

Someday, a duly elected leader of Iraq will be sitting down with an American President talking about the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe millions in the Middle East plead in silence for freedom. I believe women in the Middle East want to grow up in a free society and raise their children in freedom. I believe that if given a chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and the deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. As John mentioned, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It is a day I will never forget. Workers in hardhats yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up working hard to figure out how best to protect America. I will never relent in defending the security of this country, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your beautiful State asking for the vote, I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, with your vote, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:16 p.m. at the Jackson County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

October 15, 2004

The President. It is great—thank you all. It is great to be back in Iowa. This isn't the first time we've been here. [*Laughter*] It's not going to be our last, either. I want to thank you for putting up the signs and doing the hard work. I want to thank you for what you're going to do over the next couple of weeks, and that is turn out the vote. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry Iowa and win a great victory on the 2d of November.

And I just told the chairman—I call him the chairman. You call him Chuck. [*Laughter*] I said, "I got a job for him over the next 4 years." He said, "What's that?" I said, "Well, get those lawn mowers cranked up; there's a lot of grass on the South Lawn."

And tell your friends and neighbors, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

The President. I'm pleased——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I'm pleased that Laura is traveling with me today. She is—we were in Las Vegas yesterday, and there was an important conference. The AARP was having a convention, and they said, "Send your best speaker over." So I went to the rally, and Laura went to the AARP. [*Laughter*] People have come to know her like I know her. She's warm. She's compassionate. She's a strong woman. She is a great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate. Dick Cheney is doing a fine job. In the debate the other night, I admit he didn't have the waviest hair. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, and he's getting the job done for the American people.

I appreciate working with the chairman. He always talks about Iowa. Chuck Grassley is a good friend. He's a really good United States Senator. And so is your Congressman, Jim Leach. I appreciate Jim. What a decent and honorable man Jim Leach is. And I'm

proud that the chairman of the Budget Committee in the House of Representatives, Jim Nussle, is with us as well.

I want to thank the grassroots activists, all the people who are doing all the hard work. You never get thanked enough, and so here's my chance to thank you before election day. Keep putting up the signs. Keep making the phone calls. Turn out the vote, and we will win.

I enjoyed our debates. I enjoyed standing up there with my opponent, talking about our differences, and we have big differences. We have very different records and different plans for the future. My record is one of reforming education, of lowering taxes, of providing prescription drug coverage for seniors, for improving homeland protections, and for waging an aggressive war against the ideologues of hate. The Senator's record is 20 years of out-of-the-mainstream votes without many significant reforms or results to show for those 20 years. The records are important because our country faces many challenges, and the next President must recognize the need for reform and must be able to lead to achieve them.

On issue after issue, from jobs to health care to the need to strengthen Social Security, Senator Kerry's policies fail to recognize the changing realities of today's world and the need for fundamental reforms. In our final debate, when I talked about the vital link between education and jobs, the Senator didn't seem to get it. He said I switched away from jobs and started talking about education. No, good jobs start with good education. At a time when most new jobs require at least 2 years of college, I understand that one of the best ways to keep jobs in America is to make sure our workforce is educated, the most highly skilled, the most creative, and the most innovative in the world. That's how we create jobs here in America.

When it comes to health care, once again, the other night, with a straight face—[*laughter*]—the Senator said his health care was not a Government plan.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I could barely contain myself. Twenty-two million new people would enroll in a Government program under his plan, the largest expansion of Government health care ever. Eighty percent of the newly insured would be placed on a Government program like Medicaid. He claims his plan would help small businesses. Yet studies conducted by people who understand small businesses concluded that his plan is an overpriced albatross that would saddle small businesses with 225 new mandates.

I have a different view. We'll work to make sure health care is available and affordable. We'll help our small businesses. The decisions will be made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The Senator said about Social Security, if, later on, after a period of time, we find that Social Security is in trouble, then he'll call a meeting of experts. [*Laughter*] See, it seems that he likes meetings. [*Laughter*] Younger workers understandably worry whether Social Security will be there when they need it. We have plans for the future. We will solve problems before they—before it's too late. As I said in the debate the other night, our seniors have nothing to worry about when it comes to their Social Security check. You might remember the 2000 campaign, and those ads said, "If George W. gets in, you're not going to get your check." You got your checks. You will continue to get your check.

But for the sake of our children and our grandchildren, we must confront the Social Security problem now. Younger workers must be able to take some of their own payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account that will earn better interest, an account they can call their own.

The last few years, the people have gotten to know me. They know my blunt way of speaking. I get that from Mom. [*Laughter*] They know I sometimes mangle the English language. I get that from Dad. [*Laughter*] Americans also know I tell you what I'm going to do and that I keep my word.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. When I came into office, the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months, and the American economy was sliding into a recession. To help families, to get this economy growing again, I pledged to reduce taxes. I

kept my word. Because we acted—and I include the Senator and Members of Congress here from Iowa, not all of them but most of them—because we acted, the recession was one of the shallowest in American history.

Over the last 3 years, our economy has grown at the rate—at the fastest rate of any major industrialized nation. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. I remember campaigning in Iowa, and I made it clear to the farmers here that I understand a healthy economy requires a healthy farm economy. And today, farm and ranch income is up. In the past 13 months, we've added more than 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate in America is 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in Iowa is down to 4.5 percent. This economy is moving forward, and we're not going back to the old days of tax and spend.

Listen, to make sure jobs stay here in America and people can find work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on the job creators. That means we've got to do something about the frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for people to expand their businesses.

To keep jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. The plan encourages conservation. It focuses on renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages new technologies. It encourages clean coal technology and increased domestic production. To create jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs, to make sure people can find work, we've got to reject economic isolationism. We need to open up markets for Iowa farm products, for example. See, America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. To create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

My opponent has his own history on the economy. In 20 years as a Senator from Massachusetts, he's built the record of a Senator from Massachusetts. He has voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a vote for a tax increase about five times every year he has served in the Senate. That qualifies as a pattern. [*Laughter*] He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

He looked in the camera, and he promised not to raise taxes on anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] You see, he's promised about $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T". And he says he's going to raise the top two brackets, which raises between 600 billion and 800 billion. There is a tax gap. That's the difference between what he could raise and what he's promised to spend. You can't have it both ways. To pay for all his big spending promises he's made, he's going to have to raise your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But we're not going to let him; we're going to carry Iowa and win the Nation.

When I came into office, our public schools had been waiting decades for hopeful reform. Too many of our children were being shuffled through school without learning the basics. I pledged to restore accountability to our schools and end the soft bigotry of low expectations. And I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, and we're now seeing results. Our children are making sustained gains in reading and math. We are closing the achievement gap for minority students. We're making progress in America, and we will leave no child behind.

There is more work to be done. We'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous examination before graduation from high school. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

My opponent has a history on education issues—a history of almost doing nothing. The Senator has pledged to weaken the No Child Left Behind Act. He's proposed diluting the accountability standards and looking

at measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students are learning. His proposals would undermine the high standards and accountability we worked hard to pass. We've moved beyond the old days of failure and mediocrity and low standards, and we're not going back.

When I came into office, we had a problem with Medicare. See, medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't. For example, Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for heart surgery but wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. I pledged to bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen and modernize Medicare for our seniors, and I kept my word.

We strengthened Medicare. Seniors are getting discounts on medicine through prescription drug cards. Rural hospitals and doctors are being treated fairly in the State of Iowa because of the Medicare law we passed. Beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

Moving forward on health care, and there's much more to do. We need to make health care more available and affordable. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe in community health centers, places where the poor and the indigent can get care. In a new term, we'll make sure every poor county in America has a community health center. We'll make sure our poor children are fully subscribed in our programs for low-income families.

We'll do more to make sure health care is affordable. Most uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To help our workers get the health care they need, we should allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses are able to do. We will expand health savings accounts.

We will make sure that health care is available and affordable by doing something about the junk lawsuits that threaten our docs, running up the cost of medicine. By forcing doctors to practice defensive medicine, medical lawsuits cost the Government about $28 billion a year. They cost our economy anywhere from 60 to 100 billion dollars a year. They're driving up insurance premiums, which drives good doctors out of practice. You cannot be pro-patient, pro-doctor, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

I believe our country can be an ownership society. You know, there's a saying that says, no one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*] There's some wisdom in that statement. See, when you own something, you care about it. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. So we encourage entrepreneurship. Every time a small business is starting, someone is achieving a part of the American Dream. We encourage homeownership in America. I love the fact that more and more people are owning up—opening up the front door of their home, saying, "Welcome to my piece of property. Welcome to my home."

You know, on issue after issue, from Medicare without choices to schools with less accountability to higher taxes, my opponent takes the side of more centralized control and more Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There's a word for that attitude. It's called liberalism. [*Laughter*] He dismisses that as a label, but he must have seen it differently when he said to a newspaper, "I am a liberal and proud of it." He's been rated by the National Journal as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. That's hard to do. [*Laughter*] He's had some serious competition. [*Laughter*]

See, I have a different record and a very different philosophy. I don't believe in big Government, and I don't believe in indifferent Government. I'm a compassionate conservative. I believe in policies that empower people to improve their lives. I do not believe in policies that try to run people's lives. And so we're helping men and women find the skills and tools to prosper in a time of change. We're helping all Americans to have a future of dignity and independence.

And that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In this time of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

Listen, my opponent's words on these issues are a little muddy, but his record is plenty clear. He says he supports the institution of marriage, but he voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He calls himself—at one time in the race called himself the candidate of conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But he has described the Reagan years as a time of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. He can run, but he cannot hide.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defeating the—we're defending our homeland. We're strengthening the intelligence services. We're modernizing and transforming our United States military so we can keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will spread liberty and freedom. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was about 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, Afghanistan is free and is now an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

And part of our strategy for a safe and peaceful world is to continue to spread freedom, and freedom is on the march. As we worked to secure ourselves in Afghanistan and Iraq, 50 million people have been freed from the clutches of brutal tyranny—50 million.

Think about what happened in Afghanistan. I want the youngsters here to realize what took place recently in history. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school. Their mothers were pulled in the public square and whipped because they wouldn't toe the line to an ideology of hate. These people lived in darkness. Because we acted, people were freed. Thousands and thousands of people went to vote for a President. The first person to vote in the Afghan Presidential election was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is powerful. Can you imagine a society that's gone from darkness to light in 3 short years? Freedom is on the move.

There will be elections in Iraq. It hadn't been all that long ago that there was torture chambers and mass graves. Then the people will be having a chance to vote for President

and Prime Minister of that country. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. Freedom will help us keep the peace. Freedom will make America more secure.

So our mission is clear. We will help Afghanistan and Iraq train armies and police so their people can do the hard work of defending democracy. We will help them get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

It's a high honor to be the Commander in Chief of such a great military. We're a great military because it's full of great people. I'm proud of our military. I'm proud of our military families. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

We will continue to make sure our troops have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It was really an important piece of legislation. The bipartisan support was very strong. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the $87 billion, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, when you're out gathering the vote, when you're out convincing people to go to the polls and getting them to be for us, remind them of this fact. Only 4 United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against providing the funding necessary to support our troops in combat—only 4 of 100—2 of whom, 50 percent of whom, are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him why he made the vote. You might remember one of the most famous quotes in this campaign season. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. He's given a lot of explanations for that vote since. One of the most interesting ones of all, he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In our debate, Senator Kerry proposed that we should pass a "global test" before we defend ourselves.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The problem with that "global test" is that the Senator can't ever pass it. I say that because in 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined the coalition. Yet, even after the United Nations' approval, in the United States Senate, Senator Kerry voted against authorization for the use of force. He couldn't pass his own test.

In this campaign, you might remember he said that removing Saddam Hussein was a mistake. He actually said he would have done it differently. He would have had the U.N. pass another resolution. [*Laughter*] If Senator Kerry had his way, not only would Saddam Hussein still be in a palace in Baghdad, he'd be occupying Kuwait. This world of ours is safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

We'll continue to build strong alliances. I talked with Tony Blair today, on Air Force One. He's a great ally. And we'll build on those alliances, and we'll strengthen our coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. Perhaps I can explain it to you this way. Prime Minister Koizumi is a good friend of mine and Laura's. But it wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with the Japanese. My dad fought in World War II. I know dads and granddads of the people out here fought in World War II as well, against a sworn enemy. And it was a tough war. It was a brutal war, like all war.

And after World War II, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. That's what he believed. So after

the war was over, we worked with the Japanese to build a democracy. There's a lot of people in this country who were skeptical about that action, skeptical about whether an enemy could ever become an ally, skeptical about whether Japan would become a democracy, skeptical about efforts to help them after they had hurt many of our citizens. But people believed. And as a result of that belief, today, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace that we all want.

Someday, a duly elected leader of Iraq will sit down with an American President, talking about how to keep the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for freedom. I believe that women in the Middle East want to grow up in a free society, and they want to raise their children in a free society. I believe that if given a chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man: democracy. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day I will never forget. Workers in hardhats were there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a fellow grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State in the caucuses and then in the general election, I pledged that if you honored me with the high office of President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. On to victory.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the U.S. Cellular Center. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Message on the Observance of Ramadan

October 15, 2004

I send warm greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world as they begin observance of Ramadan, the holiest season in their faith.

Ramadan commemorates the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammed. By teaching the importance of compassion, justice, mercy, and peace, the Qur'an has guided many millions of believers across the centuries. Today, this holy time is still set aside for Muslims to remember their dependence on God through fasting and prayer, and to show charity to those in need.

American history has taught us to welcome the contributions of men and women of all faiths, for we share the fundamental values of religious freedom, love of family, and gratitude to God. Americans who practice the Islamic faith enrich our society and help our Nation build a better future.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 9

In the morning, in St. Louis, MO, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Waterloo, IA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Jim Glaza.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chanhassen, MN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Ken Porwoll. Later, he traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, where he was joined by Mrs. Bush.

October 10

In the evening, the President participated in a debate preparation session.

October 11

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Hobbs, NM, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Jamie Gaston.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Denver, CO, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Ashley Stieb.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Morrison, CO. Later, he returned to Denver, CO. While en route, he participated in a debate preparation session.

October 12

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Colorado Springs, CO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteers Bob Carlone and Joe Henjum.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Paradise Valley, AZ, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Marcelo Chan.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Phoenix, AZ.

Also in the afternoon, the President participated in debate preparation sessions.

In the evening, the President participated in a debate preparation session. Later, he and Mrs. Bush, who joined the President earlier in the day, had dinner with Senator John McCain of Arizona and his wife, Cindy.

October 13

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Tempe, AZ. Later, they returned to Phoenix, AZ.

October 14

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Las Vegas, NV, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Dick Cancellier.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Reno, NV, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Frank Schnorbus.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Central Point, OR, arriving in the evening. Upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Lois Rodger.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Jacksonville, OR.

October 15

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Cedar Rapids, IA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had an intelligence briefing. Upon arrival in Cedar Rapids, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Linda Peterson.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Oshkosh, WI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Jeff Kemp. Later, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a Victory 2004 rally at the Experimental Aircraft Association Building.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to designate Darrell Irions and Dee J. Kelly, Jr., as members of the Board of Governors on the United Service Organizations, Inc.

The President announced his intention to designate William A. Moorman as Acting Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Management.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released October 12

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released October 13

Transcript of a press gaggle by White House Communications Director Dan Bartlett

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4837 and S. 1778

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Meghan L. O'Sullivan as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Strategic Planning and Southwest Asia at the National Security Council

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Reuben Jeffery III as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for International Economic Affairs at the National Security Council

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Robert L. Wilkie as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Legislative Affairs at the National Security Council

Released October 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Fulfilling the President's Commitment to Hurricane Victims

Released October 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Acts Approved by the President

Approved October 13

H.R. 4837 / Public Law 108–324
Military Construction Appropriations and Emergency Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005

S. 1778 / Public Law 108–325
Craig Recreation Land Purchase Act

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